

**Shared Life as God's People: An Exploration of Exclusion and
Koinonia in Social Relations in Rwanda.**

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**A Thesis Presented to the University of Edinburgh for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Edinburgh
1999**



Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely the product of my own research and was composed by myself, and that all ideas and written materials used are, to the best of my knowledge, appropriately acknowledged.

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, one of the many questions that Rwandan Christians asked was 'How could such a tragedy happen in one of the most Christianised countries in Africa?'

While some of those reflecting on the genocide predictably asked 'Why did God not intervene to prevent or stop the genocide?', the majority focussed on ethnicity as the root cause of the conflict. Their argument was that conflict originated in the divide-and-rule policies carried out by both the colonial administrators and the Christian missionaries. Their successors, the Rwandan political leaders continued to promote exclusive and divisive policies based on ethnicity, religious affiliation, birthplace and gender. The Rwandan Christian clergy, who succeeded the early Christian missionaries, constantly failed to offer effective criticism or moral and spiritual guidance.

There is no doubt that there is substance to this argument and that the above factors contributed to the Rwandan tragedy. Nevertheless, ethnic, religious, regional and gender identities have little overriding significance unless they are seen in the context of their socio-economic implications for the ordinary lives of Rwandans. It is when these identities are used as a passport to land, job, education and other opportunities that they become paradigms for exclusion or inclusion in society and its systems.

Throughout the history of Rwanda large groupings of people have been excluded from land, from their communities and from the means of livelihood to which they were entitled. Myths and ideologies played an important part in the establishment of this culture of domination, exclusion and exploitation. Furthermore, taxation and education were in the hands of a small élite and were used as a means to preserve their own privileged status, instead of being used to build up the community. This strategy of control and exclusion is the antithesis of the principle of *koinonia*, shared life as God's people, on which the Christian life is meant to be based. The Rwandan community signally failed to exhibit *koinonia*, supporting division and exclusion by allowing ethnicity, religion, birthplace and gender to serve as passports or barriers to land, education, employment and opportunities for personal and social development. Given the extent of the erosion of traditional social mores and of Christian principles, the genocide of 1994 was a tragedy waiting to happen. This thesis is therefore a study of factors which cumulatively provided the conditions for the eruption of the 1994 Rwandan tragedy. And the content of the concept of *koinonia* provides a way of understanding the ideal of community Christians in Rwanda and outside in the world church are called to build.

The key virtues of *Koinonia*, namely love, peace, equality and justice, can be practically demonstrated in a redistribution of land, a revival of the tradition of reciprocity and solidarity, and in the promotion of income-generating projects for those socially excluded.

Acknowledgement

First of all, I thank God for His sufficient grace: He gave me enough strength and discernment when I was exhausted; He constantly re-awoke my vision of faith when I was in doubt about the purpose of my academic discipline; He provided for the daily needs of my family during this research.

I embarked upon it with strong motivation but some trepidation. I felt the call to analyse the social evils that surrounded the Rwandan tragedy. But I have not fully recovered from the death of my father just at the beginning of the project. In the middle of my research I lost other close relatives and even my homeland. Without support and understanding my research would have been too heavy a task for my restless mind. I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the Department of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology and the Nicolson Square Methodist Church for their moral and spiritual support which has been always available to me throughout the period of this research.

There are many whose support and forbearance have made this research possible. I gained inestimably, both academically and personally, from the supervision of Dr Ian MacDonald and Dr Marcella Althaus-Reid during the first three years and Dr Michael Northcott for the fourth year of this research. Without their critical comments and encouragement this work would not have been completed. Special thanks to Dr Marcella Althaus-Reid for encouraging me to undertake doctoral research.

Completion of this thesis would have been impossible without the financial help of the Ecumenical Scholarship Programme. Their generosity in paying University fees and supporting my family for the long period of my studies at Edinburgh (MTh, MBA and this doctoral research) have been immensely treasured.

To mention by name the colleague students at Edinburgh University from whose comments I have benefited would be too difficult a task, but it would be wrong not to acknowledge how much I learned from Colin and Maureen Marsh, Tharcisse Gatwa, Nicholas Hitimana who, being well acquainted with the Rwandan situation, provided the testing field of my analysis. I would like to say thanks to the staff of the New College Library and the Bibliothèque du Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale de Tervuren (Belgium) for helping me to get documentation in their libraries. My thanks go also to Dr James and Thérèse Gasana, Dr Manassé and Odette Gatera for the material they provided to this research and their hospitality on my trips respectively to Geneva and Brussels.

Living and studying in a foreign country is not always easy. Many friends shared the ups and downs of our life here in Edinburgh, among them Jill & Paul King, Maureen & Colin Marsh, Josephine & Tharcisse Gatwa, Elsie & Nicholas Hitimana, Margaret & Harry Batty, Vivienne & Tony Davis, Sue & Cameron Rose, Lesley Bilinda, Toni & David Thomas. To these and to others who are not mentioned here, I say thanks.

I am especially in the debt of Margaret Batty, Maureen Marsh and Toni Thomas for their resilience in proof reading my texts. Perhaps all too typically, my final thanks go to Helen, my wife, Aline, Price and Chris our children, for unselfishly feeling that what was important to me was important to them.

July 1999
New College
Edinburgh/Scotland

List of tables

Pages

Table 1: Colonial classification of ethnic physical differences	21
Table 2: Sizes and prices of lands acquired by early Christian missionaries	98
Table 3: Erosion of Rwandan coffee farmer's purchasing power	110
Table 4: Free fall of coffee on the international market 1981-91	112
Table 5: Ethnic distribution in <i>Groupe Scholaire</i> of Astrida between 1932 – 1954:193..	174
Table 6: Ethnic distribution of school children in the year 1957-1958	175
Table 7: Income disparities between town and countryside in 1991.....	217
Table 8: Basic commodities price disparities towns/countryside in 1991	218

Abbreviations

BCAR: Banque Continentale Africaine du Rwanda
BCR: Banque Commerciale du Rwanda
BK: Banque Nationale du Rwanda
BRD: Banque Rwandaise de Développement
CMS: Church Missionary Society
CPR: Conseil Protestant du Rwanda
CSEL: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CZN: Projet de Mise en Valeur des Plateaux de la Crete Zaire Nil
DGB: Projet de Développement Global de Butare
DRB: Projet de Developpement Rural de Byumba
EDCS: Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society
EIRIS: Ethical Investment Research Institute
FMCR: Free Methodist Church of Rwanda
GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IFES: International Fellowship of Evangelical Students
IMF: International Monetary Fund
LDCs: Less Developed countries
MAI: Multilateral Agreement on Investments
MDR: Movement Democratique Républicain
MED: Micro-Enterprise Development
MRAC: Musée Royale de l'Afrique Centrale
MRND: Movement Révolutionnaire National Pour le Développement
NRA: National Resistance Army
NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RCC: Roman Catholic Church
RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front
Tr.P.Nz. : Translated by Paul Nzacahayo
UNCTC: United Nations Centre for Transnational Corporations

WB: World Bank

WCC: World Council of Churches

WTO: World Trade Organisation

Table of Contents	Pages
Abstract	i
Acknowledgement	ii
List of tables	iii
Abbreviations	iv
Introduction	1
1. The background of the Research.....	1
2. The Context of the study: The land and its people.....	4
3. Methodology	5
4. Presentation	8
Chapter One	
<i>Koinonia</i> and the Rwandan conflict.....	13
1.1. Introduction	13
1.2. Overview of the Rwandan conflict	14
1.3. Identified causes of the conflict	18
1.4. The Rwandan Conflict and the Concept of <i>Koinonia</i>	33
1.5. Conclusion	52
Chapter Two	
Exclusion by Myths and Ideologies	54
2.1. Introduction	54
2.2. The Myth of a superior race	54
2.3. <i>Ubugukunze</i> as an ideological tool for exclusion	68
2.4. Conclusion	86

Chapter Three

The Divisive Role of Money in Social Relations	89
3.1. Introduction	89
3.2. Serving two masters	90
3.3. 'Land shall not be sold in perpetuity...'	93
3.4. 'You shall have just balance, and a just price...'	103
3.5. Cash cropping: An addictive process	107
3.6. Interest on loans and the erosion of reciprocity.....	116
3.7. Conclusion.....	127

Chapter Four

Exclusion by Taxation	129
4.1. Introduction	129
4.2. To Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God ...'	129
4.3. Tribute and Taxation: the losers and the winners.....	140
4.4. Taxing the underpaid and overburdened	145
4.5. Conclusion	156

Chapter Five

Exclusion by and from Education	158
5.1. Introduction	158
5.2. Education as a divine imperative for the community.....	159
5.3. Education as an ideological tool for exclusion	161
5.4. Distribution of education opportunities	171
5.5. Exclusion from employment market	182

5.6. Conclusion.....	185
Chapter Six	
The Pauperisation of the Rwandan Community.....	187
6.1. Introduction	187
6.2. Conflicting views on the possession wealth	188
6.3. A minority of wealthy versus a poor majority	198
6.4. Rich towns versus poor countryside	209
6.5. Conclusion	220
Chapter Seven	
Working for Reconciliation, Peace and Justice	
7.1. Introduction	221
7.2. For Forgiveness and Reconciliation.....	221
7.3.Arms into ploughshares	230
7.4. Becoming instruments of economic justice	233
7.5. Land distribution	240
7.6. Moderation and Equality.....	244
7.7. Alternative investment: An option for the poor.....	247
7.8. Renewal of reciprocity.....	251
7.9. Conclusion.....	260
Summary and Conclusion	262
Bibliography	269
Appendix I: Map of Rwanda.....	285
Appendix II: The contract of <i>Ubugake</i>	286
Appendix III: The abolition of <i>Ubugake</i>	289

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of the factors which cumulatively provided the conditions for the eruption of the 1994 tragedy in which more than a million Rwandans perished. The content of the concept of *koinonia* (love, peace, equality and justice) is used as a way of understanding the ideal of community life.

1. The Background of the Research

By the time I started this research in 1995, a year had elapsed since the 1994 tragedy that cost the lives of many Rwandans. At that time millions of Rwandans including my own immediate family became refugees and left the country. As the new wave of refugees went into exile they encountered many of those who had been in exile for thirty years who were now returning. For a year I related to the lives of those who returned to their homeland after many years of absence, to those who remained in the country and to the new refugees. During this period my hope was that the situation would improve so that I could go back and contribute to the rebuilding of my country. To my horror, the situation deteriorated and eventually I felt personally threatened. Members of my family were subjected to different kinds of abuses; threatened, imprisoned or killed if they did not leave the country. By then my brother and sisters were living in exile, my nephew was assassinated in Nairobi in early 1996 and my cousin, a politician of integrity, seriously wounded in a failed assassination in which a Rwandan diplomat was involved. This cousin was assassinated one year later. Then I heard that somebody had taken over my house and my land. As a family we felt increasingly torn apart from our roots and experienced the pain of displacement, exclusion and loss of identity.

Through these experience and those of families and friends close to me I can identify with many Rwandans who either in the past or in the present have experienced harrowing exclusion and loss of identity. At different periods, individuals and groups of Rwandans have been excluded, from their lands, from their home and resources. Some were forced into exile leaving everything behind: their lands, their families and communities. They were intelligent, hard-working people, who were simply the victims of extraordinary circumstances of exclusion.

I can strongly identify with those who lost relatives and friends in the recent genocide. As one of the survivors of the genocide painfully observed, these horrors and experiences were not easy to explain to people removed from the context in

which they happened: 'They were experiences too deep, too painful, too unbelievable to tell. Yet they are true; they really happened. Will anyone understand? Will anyone take the time to listen?'¹ I can identify with refugees who fall into silence and prolonged sadness and depression because there is no one who will listen with the heart in their new contexts and be grateful for those who do make the efforts to penetrate the silence. Through this shared suffering I can also empathise with the one million internally displaced people of the early 1990s, excluded by war in which factions seeking political and economic power were fighting each other for their own interests.

My heart can also beat with empathy for those, in the past, economically excluded from their community: clients working hard for their patrons and relying only on hand-outs; the land-less and cattle-less poor who keenly suffered the hardship of this exclusion; and the land-less women who found themselves excluded by a male-dominated culture which did not recognise female inheritance of property. I recall how in 1973 when I was in primary school, school-mates and teachers were prevented from entering their classes because of their ethnic identity. I connected this with another more personal experience twenty years later when I was informally questioned by colleagues for having given employment to somebody from another ethnic group, on the grounds that 'we are getting too many of them'.

My personal experience with exclusion and my identification with the victims were therefore the primary triggers for this research. I then read the post-genocide literature on Rwanda and discovered that it focussed on ethnicity as the root cause of the conflicts among Rwandan Christians. I was not fully convinced of this, and decided to put ethnic conflicts in Rwanda in broader perspective in order to try to give a more complete picture. While I recognised that ethnicity is admittedly one of the major manifestations of exclusion, I doubted that it was the sole cause of the conflict. Consequently from my questioning of the nature of the Rwandan Christian community² the concept of socio-economic exclusion emerged into the foreground of my concern.

¹ Bilinda, L., *The Colour of Darkness: A personal story of tragedy and hope in Rwanda*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996, p.213. Lesley Bilinda, a Scottish Tear Fund health worker in Rwanda in the early 1990s, was married to Charles Bilinda, a Rwandan pastor who was killed in the 1994 genocide. She recounted her agonising experience of not knowing the whereabouts of her husband, and the search to know what happened to him. Her story depicts the experience of many Rwandans who survived the tragedies.

² 90% of Rwandans claim to be 'Christians' (65% Roman Catholics, 20% Protestants and 5% Seventh Day Adventist) cf H. McCullum, *The Angels have left us: The Rwanda Tragedy and the Churches*,

Since matters of relationship are vital for any society, it is necessary to reflect on the moral and theological implications of such social and economic exclusion. I subscribe to the view that a theologian has to speak from within the community of believers and also speaks from the commitment of faith.³ My hope is that this theological discourse will help Rwandan Christians to come to terms with the causes of the breakdown of the Rwandan community, by re-examining their relations with one another, in order to better exemplify the Christian identity to which they have been called. Because as I reflected on the nature of the problem and the sheer number of Rwandans who, in one way or another, have been affected by socio-economic exclusion, I came to the conviction that the 1994 tragedy in which millions of Rwandans lost their lives was not an isolated event, but rather the climax of circumstances of social, economic and political exclusion that developed over many years.

Believing in my calling as a minister, I have been personally challenged to reflect deeply and search for a principle that could be used to highlight the ideal of community, a principle of hope and renewal in the light of God's plan for humanity; a principle that could challenge forms of exclusion based on gender, religion, ethnic and racial identities which are a denial of God's rights as creator and sustainer. For me the greatest sin is to exclude others, because by excluding others, we exclude ourselves and God. The concept of *koinonia* is used in this thesis as a way of understanding the ideal of community. One of the key theological building-blocks underlying the potential of mutual recognition of members of the Christian community is *koinonia*, usually translated 'fellowship' and 'partnership'. At its centre is the theological affirmation that human beings are all members of the household of God and that they are built into it as a dwelling of God in Christ with the implications that God's people should live together in peace and mutual enrichment.⁴ This requires mutual recognition of members and a sharing in each other's lives. This concept is particularly important to the Rwandan case because it offers a Christian and theological understanding against which the factors that led to

Geneva: WCC Publications, 1995 p. 65. The term 'Christian' community is used in this work in reference to these 90% Rwandans who confess to be Christians. In addition to this reality of Rwanda being a Christian country, its political leaders (*the entire* political leadership) have claimed this Christian identity since 1935.

³ Thiemann, R.F., *Constructing a Public Theology: The Church in a pluralistic Culture*, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991, p.135

⁴ Moede, G. F., *Oneness in Christ – The Quest and questions*, Princeton: Minute Press, 1981, p.77

the 1994 tragedy can be analysed. It warrants not only pluralism and diversity,⁵ but also peace, equality and justice. It helps Rwandan Christians and Christians outside in the world Church to see the urgency of the calling to work for a community in which love, peace, justice and equality are practised.

2. The context of the research: The land and its people

Rwanda covers an area of 26,338 sk. It is landlocked between Uganda in the north, Tanzania in the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west and Burundi in the south. As the crow flies (see map in appendix 1) it is located at 1,200 km from the Indian Ocean and at 2,200 km from the Atlantic Ocean. Rwanda is a densely populated country, with a population of 7.5 million in 1993⁶ (in an area of 26,338 km).

Three ethnic groups live in Rwanda: Hutus (84% of the population), Tutsis (15%) and Twas (1%). Most historians of Rwanda agree that the Twas (who are very similar to pygmies) constitute the most indigenous people of Rwanda in the sense that they were the first to occupy the land. They initially lived on gathering and hunting. Their way of life evolved over the years to integrate other economic activities such as pottery making and agriculture. Twas are divided into two groups: *Impunyu* hunters living in the highlands of north-west Rwanda and *Ababumbyi*, potters living in mixed communities with Hutus and Tutsis in cleared areas.⁷

The Hutus' arrival is traced to between the 7th and the 10th century, when extensive migration took them from the regions of Lake Chad towards Zaire and the countries bordering the Zambezi area. These people who outnumbered the indigenous Twas spread rapidly through East Africa, bringing with them an agricultural culture. The Hutus of Rwanda belong to that group of Bantu who live on a wide region stretching from the north of Uganda to the Austral Africa sub-region, crossing the Central

⁵ Mahoney, J., *The Making of Moral Theology; A study of the Roman Catholic Tradition*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, p.342

⁶ With the ethnic massacres of 1994 and onwards that claimed about 3.1 million lives and the bulk of refugees who did not come back now the population has fallen to between 5 and 6 million. These figures have been suggested by James K. Gasana. in *Church-State relations and other factors relating to the Hutu-Tutsi antagonism in Rwanda*. A paper presented at the Conference of Central Africa Health Organisations, Winona Lake, April 26, 1997.

⁷ Twagirayesu Eleazar, *La Question démographique au Rwanda: Stratégies multinationales de Contrôle des naissances et stratégies pastorales en éducation familiale*. Thèse présentée en vue de l'obtention du grade de Docteur en Théologie à la Faculté de Théologie Protestante au Zaïre, Kinshasa, April 1994.

Africa sub-region. These Bantu people established themselves on the hills of Rwanda and were organised into small chiefdoms governed by chiefs or *Abahinza* who had all the legitimacy of royalty.⁸ These *Abahinza* enjoyed absolute authority and were accorded divine attributes. They were thought to be responsible for soil fertility, rainfall and weather fluctuation. They had the right of life and death over their subjects.⁹

Towards the end of the 13th century, another migration moved from the Nile region, between Lake Albert and Bahr-el-Gazal. These people were in three groups: the Bahima, the Massai and the Tutsi. The group Bahima-Tutsi founded a series of political groups in the Great Lake Region consisting of Bunyoro, Buganda, Nkole, Burundi, Buha and Rwanda. They were nomadic people searching for grazing grounds for their cattle.¹⁰

Although these three groups (Hutus, Tutsis and Twas) speak the same language, live together in mixed communities throughout the country, inter-marry¹¹, participate together in churches, schools, hospitals and invite each other to special ceremonial occasions, they exhibit certain differences, particularly at the level of occupational activities. Tutsi were mainly pastoralists, Hutu agriculturists and Twas potters. However, the three groups produced and consumed together through exchange of the means of production and products, and were linked by unequal ties of dependence and exploitation.

3. Methodology

It is worthwhile to devote a short section to stating the principles that will guide our methodology. According to Lonergan, a theological method can be defined as 'a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results'¹²

⁸ Hermans R., *Introduction a l'histoire du Rwanda*, Bruxelles/Kigali, Editions A. DeBoeck/Ed.Rwanda, 1973, pp.21-22

⁹ Twagirayesu E., *op.cit.*, p.13

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ This inter-marriage has been going on for centuries and has happened at all levels of Rwandan society; but more frequently among the Hutu and Tutsi elite and politicians. Kayibanda, who was the second president is said to have had a Tutsi wife. However inter-marriage between Twas and the other two ethnic groups was rare.

¹² Lonergan, B., *Method in Theology*, London/Darton:Longman & Todd, 1972, p.5

This research attempts a descriptive, analytical and theological methodology which requires the integration of historical, social anthropological tools. As Macquarrie points out, theology, as an intellectual discipline, must stand in relation to other disciplines.¹³ Historical and economic reconstruction is important because Christian theology takes its origin from a revelation given in a historical person. As new forms of socio-economic relations evolve from and coexist with old ones, Christian theology is called to interact, though in a limited and circumscribed way, with economic history in order to discern the pattern of the working of God in society and church.

Anthropological research sheds some light on the origins of the self-understanding of Rwandans in relation to the divinity and the early stages of its evolution. It leaves no doubt that some of the exclusion, discrimination and ethnic hatred have their origin in myths and legends. Myths themselves are shown to be shot through with ignorance, superstition and self-centredness. Anthropological enquiry is needed because economic relations were shared by people who held particular norms and values. For Rwandan Christians, innovations brought about in socio-economic relations did not simply reflect passing fads and fashions, but resulted in behavioural transformation which led to profound social and cultural changes.

Sociology too has its points of contact with this theological exercise. Macquarrie emphasised this relationship in these terms.

In the community of faith, attention is directed to the faith which has created the community, and this faith is thought of as having some transcendent character; but viewed from outside, the same community appears as a community within the world, subject to all the usual laws of social dynamics, responding to pressures, needs, fears, the desire for security, and other purely immanent factors.¹⁴

In this way sociology can help to highlight certain aspects of the community of faith that should be noticed by a theologian. Therefore history, sociology and anthropology will add their valuable perspectives to the theological interpretation of the Rwandan Christian experience.

¹³ Macquarrie, J., *Principles of Christian Theology (Revised ed.)*, London: SCM Press, 1977, p.21

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.29

Combining these different approaches (anthropology, socio-economic history and theology) allows theology and ethics to be put in dialogue with the Rwandan socio-economic realities in order to rediscover the roots of evil that caused the break-down of the Rwandan Christian community. Theology and ethics aim at a better intellectual understanding of the nature of social relations and endeavour to expose both social and structural sin. They are prophetic in the sense that they attempt to attribute blame and responsibility. As a moral and theological project ethics and theology are called to engage in a continual dialogue with the Rwandan experience.

The chosen methodology offers the advantage of integrating various dimensions of socio-economic experiences into the analysis. By way of description, interpretation and application, it provides scope for a theological consideration of the meanings and symbols embedded in social and economic transactions and accommodates an effort to view the Rwandan conflict (mostly presented as an ethnic one) in its historical socio-economic context. For Macquarrie, description, also called phenomenological procedure, allows theological discussion to be located in man, sin and God. Interpretation allows analysis and understanding of our day-to-day actions and signs. There is application because theology emerges from within the life of the community of faith seeking to bring this faith to clear and coherent expression.¹⁵ In the words of Paul Tillich, the Church is both theological and sociological in the sense that it is open to spiritual and empirical investigations.¹⁶ This paradoxical nature of the Church places theologians on a middle ground, calling them to avoid both a realistic interpretation of the Christian community which ignores the permanent contradiction between its meaning and reality, and 'idealistic interpretations which tend to approximate its reality and its meaning'.¹⁷

The methodological presentation of the material in this work goes through different sequences: it starts with the recognition and description of the breakdown of the Rwandan Christian community and then presents different views on its causes. It shifts the theological debate from questioning God's responsibility in the tragedy to Christians' responsibility in the shaping of Rwandan social relations.

Throughout this study a socio-theological dialogue is initiated which is an attempt to obtain a theological understanding of the Rwandan conflict. As Tillich rightly noted,

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp.25-38

¹⁶ Kegley, C. W. & Bretall, R.W., (ed.), *The Library of living Theology, Vol.1, The Theology of Paul Tillich*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952, p.256

¹⁷ *ibid.* p.254

the task of theology is 'to state the eternal Christian message and to relate it to the existing cultural situation.'¹⁸ It seeks to understand more fully and more critically the Christian faith in order that the community might better exemplify the Christian identity to which it has been called.¹⁹ Recounting the social structures in which the tragedy occurred will have the particular purpose of relating the theological principle of *koinonia* to the social reality and the practical experience of Rwandan Christians.

This thesis draws mainly from documentary research, reviewing in particular what has been said on the Rwandan conflict and its causes. It focuses on the period before the 1994 genocide. During this process we collected socio-anthropological and economic data and statistics through articles, books and studies in relation to Rwanda.²⁰ The research has been inevitably limited by the prevailing situation of insecurity in Rwanda and of course by my personal circumstances; I could not return to do the desired field research which would have been of much help to the final result of this project. However this was compensated by other contacts I established with Rwandan communities living outside the country mainly in Kenya, Belgium, Switzerland and Britain, who provided valuable relevant research material.

4. Presentation

Chapter One reviews the Rwandan conflict. It discusses different theories that have been advanced as the causes of the conflicts such as ethnicity, bad colonial policy, bad Rwandan leadership, outside invasion, and the policies of international financial institutions. It expands on the colonial and post-colonial period to examine the ethnic characteristics that have been seen in the conflict. All these factors contributed to the breakdown of the Rwandan community. But it is when ethnicity, regionalism and these other causes are put into a broader socio-economic context, that the evils they carried can be clearly exposed. The exposition of the social factors that led to the

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.30

¹⁹ Thiemann, R.F., *op. cit.*, p.135

²⁰ Taylor, C. Christopher, *Milk, Honey and Money-Changing concepts in Rwanda Healing*. Washington – London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992; Newbury, Catherine, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda 1860-1960*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1988; Linden, Ian, *Church and Revolution*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972; Maquet, Jacques, *Le Systeme des Relations Sociales dans le Rwanda Ancien*, Tervuren: M.R.C.B, 1954; *The premise of Inequality in Ruanda*, London, Oxford University Press, 1961; de Lame, Daniel, *Une Colline Entre Mille ou le Calme avant la Tempete. Transformation et Blocage du Rwanda Rural*, Tervuren: M.R.A.C; 1996 Vo.154, 1996. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Amsterdam. ; Ndayambaje, (1997); Bonvin, 1986; Paternostre, B., *Le Rwanda et son effort de Developpement*, Bruxelles-Kigali, A. De Boeck-Editions, Rwandaïses, 1972.

1994 tragedy is detailed in chapters two, three, four and five of this thesis. In this first chapter however, *koinonia* is introduced as way of understanding the ideal of community. Its constituents: love, peace, justice, equality and reconciliation are discussed as the characteristics of this model of community.

Chapter Two traces the origins of socio-economic exclusion in myths and ideologies. Rwandan myths present Tutsis as 'people fallen from heaven' (*ibimanuka*), while Hutus and Twas are described as terrestrial people (*abasangwabutaka*). The same myths confer on cattle the same mystical origin and bestow on Tutsis their exclusive ownership. The result was the elevation of the pastoral way of life to the detriment of the agricultural way of life. The Hamite myth, preached by the European explorers, that presented Tutsis as a superior race close to the European emphasised the myths which were already existing in Rwanda. These myths were manipulated by the Nyiginya ruling class to exclude other Rwandans from the possession of land and cattle. This manipulation resulted in the ideology of *ubuhake* or clientship, that is, renting out land and cattle in exchange for goods and services. In this system all resources were in the hands of a small social group while the majority were literally excluded. The damage that was being done on people's mind and ability to challenge such disastrous ideologies is also exposed in this chapter.

When the Christian missionaries arrived they endorsed, knowingly or in ignorance, both the myths and ideology of existing ethnic inequalities and indirectly the socio-economic exclusion which these myths and ideology carried. Having failed to dismantle the existing ideology, the Rwandan Christian community remained deeply divided and the expression of *koinonia* within the Rwandan Christian community was weakened by these divisions.

Chapter three analyses the divisive role of money²¹ in the Rwandan Christian community. Money, though in limited supply, gradually acquired a more prominent role in Rwandan society as it took over the value that the cow once had. Just as the cow became a measure by which people were either socially accepted or excluded, money came to have the same significance. The selling and buying of land in Rwanda resulted in increased concentration of land in the hands of a few individuals whilst cash cropping led to the shortage of land for food crops. In addition, because the pricing mechanisms were out of farmers' control, this resulted in impoverishment

²¹ Because money can be defined in various forms, we took this term to mean the kind of money that is used in the form of notes and coin.

of the coffee growers. The banking system was the privilege of a very tiny elite and most Rwandans did not have access to loans or other grants which could help them to engage in economic activities and provide for their needs. In this sense, as the Old Testament prophets, Jesus, Paul and later theologians warned, the evil aspect of the love of money triumphed and brought about the exclusion of those Rwandans who did not possess it. This chapter argues that such a negative attitude to money was one of the factors that undermined unity, peace, justice and sharing among Rwandans; a threat to the *koinonia*.

Chapter four looks at the issue of taxation. It shifts the discussion from the question of whether or not people should pay tax, to whether they are able to pay, and asks whether tax is used for the good of the community. It highlights the impact of taxation on ordinary Rwandans. It argues that taxation in Rwanda in its various forms (in kind, labour and money) by the king and his chiefs, by the colonial administration and by the religious denominations made excessive demands on the people. In traditional Rwanda, tribute was a punishment, a kind of payment people paid after their community or group was conquered. This concept, which has an exploitative and punitive rather than a redistributive sense, survived even into the post-colonial era. This chapter argues that the biblical texts that refer to tax to the state and offerings to the Church, have social implications: in giving tax, Christians recognise the God-given role of the state to care and provide for its members which requires the use of tax. There is also the recognition that all that individual members of the community have are gifts from God which have to be used to benefit all the members of the community. Viewed against these two principles, the Rwandan community failed to provide justice to its members. This touches the way the Rwandan Church acquired and used its revenues on the one hand, and on the other, the way it impinged the socio-economic structures in which it carried its mission.

Chapter five shows how education has been used as an ideological tool, to domesticate, indoctrinate and perpetuate an ideology of exclusion, elitism and domination. Education was a scarce commodity for which Rwandans competed and fought. This competition for education and jobs set Hutus against Tutsis, girls against boys, Roman Catholics against Protestants, and northern against southern Rwandans while women remained the silent sufferers in a male-dominated society. The same patterns of exclusion from educational opportunities was also reflected in the workplace. Ethnic identities, place of birth, religious affiliation, gender pre-determined the possible outcome in the case of place in school or a job application.

The Rwandan Christian community has been implicated in these unjust practices and patterns of exclusion. The majority of schools were in the hands of the Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic church, but they missed the opportunity of building up the Christian community. Instead, they allowed education to contribute to its division, and to the exclusion of its members by their fellow Christians. Instead of giving equal treatment to all members of the community, it has followed the colonial policy of divide and rule, and in some respects, the situation was worse within ecclesiastical institutions than in public services.

Chapter six focuses on the pauperisation of Rwandan society by the concentration of wealth and income in the hands of a tiny elite. The mass of Rwandans who lived in poverty were disillusioned as they watched their leaders become millionaires overnight, by their taxes, labour and foreign aid that was given in their name. The concentration of wealth and the impoverishment of the countryside caused a flood of youth into the few towns of Rwanda in search of jobs and a living. It was from these youths that all political parties recruited their militias in the period working up to the 1994 genocide. The position of Rwandan women in relation to resource ownership in general, and to land-ownership in particular did not help to improve the deteriorating situation. Being deprived of the traditional means of production with which they could fulfil their role as mothers and carers in the village community, they watched their sons and daughters departing for the city where all sorts of problems awaited them. Church institutions were engaged in a race to strengthen their presence in towns, while acquiring properties and participating in luxurious urban life. The lifestyle of some of the clergy did not reflect the basic elements of the ideal of community God requires from his people. In fact one could speak of two separate churches: one for the rich and another for the poor. It will be argued that when the clergy became mixed up with the race for wealth and material well-being, their 'light' and 'salt' in society disappeared as sharing decreased. This situation is contrasted with Isaiah's vision (58:6-7) of a city of peace and justice in which people come before money, where they live in their own houses, their children do not die in infancy, where they have economic security and experience good health and long life.²²

Chapter seven focuses on forgiveness and reconciliation as the requirements for the renewal of the post-genocide Rwandan community. It points to a number of practical

²² Northcott, M. (ed.), *Urban Theology – A Reader*, London: Cassel, 1998, p.62

steps Rwandan Christians can take in the process of working towards the ideal of community of peace, justice and equality; where social exclusion and past economic injustices are challenged. Repentance for economic sins, the rich embracing a more basic standard of living, land redistribution, alternative investments and cultural renewal are some of the ingredients of this new economics. This chapter argues that the type of conversion and transformation needed entails the adoption of a new understanding of what it means to be a Christian, to belong to the body for which Christ is the head, to belong to the household of God. The theological principle of *koinonia*, which has love, peace, equality and justice as its life-blood, requires a certain way of life, a new identity in which individual Christians support and accept each other in practical and day-to-day life. This goes some way towards the reconstitution and renewal of community ties defined by shared values and commitments held by a people bound together by a sense of mutuality that is based on understanding and application of the theological concept of *koinonia*.

We conclude that myths and ideologies, strategies like cash cropping, capitalisation of land, taxation and education not only impaired the practices of solidarity and reciprocity in which socio-economic relations had evolved in traditional Rwanda, but also led directly to violence and to the breakdown of the Rwandan community. However, this research does not pretend to have exhausted the analysis of such a complex problem. We hope to have offered a contribution to the analysis of the connections between factors and events and a theological reflection on them. It is hoped that the data and discussions provided in this research will help Christians in Rwanda and those outside in the world Church to widen their understanding of conditions that contributed to the break-down of the Rwandan community and thus extend possibilities and abilities to work for peace, justice and reconciliation. It is also our hope that this analysis will help to rethink the way in which the Christian Gospel can be made more relevant to Rwandan socio-economic circumstances.

CHAPTER ONE

KOINONIA AND THE RWANDAN CONFLICT

1.1. Introduction

The history of human tragedies reveals that often these events are followed by moments of silence, reflection and remembrance of what happened and questioning of why things happened in the way they did. The Jews who survived the 'Death Camps' during the Second World War went through such process. Many of them were simply stunned into silence while others expressed both in speech and writing their despair at the extent of the cruelty. But the task was particularly difficult for Jewish Christians who were attempting to emerge from the grip of this nightmare and to find both a logical and a religious explanation.

Although the Rwandan case is different in its cause and nature, the same questioning was typical among the post-genocide Rwandan Christian community. They had to grapple with the reality of the genocide and ask what went wrong. This chapter presents an overview of the Rwandan conflict as an experience of the fracture of a community. It describes the main theories concerning the roots of the conflict and the theological questioning that originated from it. It is not the intention to discuss or review the argument of who killed whom, nor the role of the Rwandan Church in the conflict. That task has been done.¹ It is rather a brief account of the Rwandan conflict. In the discussion of the causes of the fracture, we limit ourselves to the principal views that have been pursued. In the last part of this chapter, the concept of *koinonia* which reflects the divine *koinonia* of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is introduced as a way of understanding the ideal of community that Christians are called live in and work for. Peace, equality, love and justice are discussed as the elements of the functioning of such a community. Throughout this discussion tension is maintained between both the actuality and eschatological aspects of such a community. In introducing the concept of *koinonia*, this chapter shifts the theological focus from the question of God's lack of intervention during the genocide to the

¹ See for instance T. Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994*: PhD Thesis Edinburgh University, 1998. He has thoroughly documented the role of Christian missionaries and Rwandan clergy in the construction of an ethnic ideology. See also African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*. London. 1994; Braeckman, C., *Rwanda. Histoire du genocide*, Paris: Fayard, 1994; Chretien, J. P. *Le defi de l'Ethnicisme: Rwanda et Burundi: 1990-1996*. Paris: Editions Karthala, 1997, Linden, I., *Church and Revolution*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977

question of what are the signs of a Christian community and to what extent the Rwandan Christians lived up to that ideal.

1.2. Overview of Rwandan conflict

One of the earlier theories advanced was that the conflict started when the Tutsis invaded and conquered Rwanda, imposing a centralized monarchy.² Although this suggestion has been rejected by more recent writers who think that this 'migration conquest hypothesis is more in the nature of a bad habit, left over from now-discredited racial theories of ethnicity in Africa, than a fact established by rigorous inquiry',³ most historians accept as fact, that about twenty generations ago, one Tutsi clan, the Nyiginya, achieved political dominance in central Rwanda. It is this Nyiginya clan that formed the core of a state that expanded to cover today's Rwandan territory.⁴ In certain Hutu chiefdoms like Bumbogo and Rukoma, the conquest was easily achieved⁵; while others presented tough resistance and it took the ruling class to conquer the country. For instance it was only in 1912 that the northern prefectures were brought under control. The south – west also submitted to the king's authority around the same period. It was during this period that one of the legendary Twa chiefs, Basebya from Ruhengeri, who rebelled against the king at the beginning of this century, was overpowered and captured after holding out for many years.⁶

It was in this unstable society that, towards the end of the last century, the western colonial powers established their rule in Rwanda. Christian missionaries followed almost immediately. In 1900, the Roman Catholic White Fathers, missionaries of Cardinal Lavigerie, inaugurated the movement. They were followed, in 1907, by the Protestant Missionaries of the Bethel Mission from Germany. As in many territories in Africa, the Germans and then the Belgians ruled by means of existing political structures. This system, known as 'indirect rule' strengthened the Nyiginya, a ruling class that had little legitimacy from the people. In fact one of the first things the Germans did for the king was to help him to bring all the Rwandan geographical

² De Paternostre, *Le Rwanda, Son effort de développement*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, 1972, p. 44

³ Ogot, B.A., 'The Great Lakes Region', in UNESCO, *General History of Africa*, Vol.IV, Heinemann, 1984, p. 63

⁴ African Rights, *op.cit.*, p.2

⁵ Oliver, R., 'The East African Interior' in R. Oliver (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol.3: c.1050 to c.1600, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p.643.

⁶ Kamukama, D., *Rwanda Conflict: Its Roots and Regional Implications*. Kampala (Uganda): Fountain Publications, 1993, p.14

areas under his control. The Germans, and then the Belgians much more systematically, tried to impose a system of exclusive rule through Tutsis. Oppression, exploitation and political exclusion increased during this period.⁷ Traditional structures such as the Hutu chiefdoms were abolished in the 1920s by the so-called 'administrative reform'.⁸

During the 1950s, the colonial power shifted its support from the Tutsi ruling class towards the new, Hutu elite and in a brutal popular revolution of 1959 the country came to independence. The struggle for power was fierce but limited because of the presence and military superiority of the Belgian troops who forced the Tutsi ruling class to surrender and accept the outcome of the elections. Those who supported the monarchy tried to make their case that the elections were rigged but their complaints went unheeded because, for them, both the Belgian administration and the Church hierarchy were now on the side of the Hutus.⁹ The victims of the violence of this period numbered 20,000 Tutsis. However according to De Paternostre, this was not one-way violence. The Tutsi ruling class resisted by all means available to them and assassinated a number of Hutu politicians.¹⁰ It was this civil strife that triggered the first wave of refugees.¹¹

In June and July 1960 the first local government elections were held amid widespread violence which caused the second wave of refugees. In 1961 the monarchy was abolished and a republic proclaimed.¹² At that time the new Republic failed to integrate the former Tutsi ruling class into its administration and as a result those who survived the violence fled the country. It is said that about 150,000 Tutsis were forced to leave Rwanda. They established themselves in neighbouring countries especially in Burundi. As early as 1961 guerrilla groups in exile started to attack Rwandan borders to regain power.¹³ These attacks continued up to 1966. Every attack they made caused killings and harassment by Hutus of the Tutsi community who had remained inside the country. The bloodiest event was that of December 21,

⁷ Jacques Maquet has extensively written on the socio-economic inequalities and political exclusion of this period in his book, *Le Systeme des relations sociales dans le Rwanda ancien*, Tervuren, 1954.

⁸ Newbury, C., *The cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, p.33

⁹ Napoleon Abdulai, (ed.), *Genocide in Rwanda. Background and Current Situation*, Ghana: Africa Research & Information Centre, 1994, p.26

¹⁰ De Paternostre, de la M., *op.cit.* p.37

¹¹ Napoleon Abdulai, (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.22

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.* See also Braeckman, C., *Rwanda. Histoire d'un Genocide*, Paris: Fayard, 1994, p. 54

1963 which claimed ten thousand victims including 20 prominent Tutsis executed by the Hutu government.¹⁴

In 1973, Tutsis were subjected to further violence which again increased the number of refugees. Later on critical politicians revealed that this violence was part of strategic military plan to demonize the existing regime in order to justify the need for a change of government¹⁵: “Many Rwandese believe that Habyarimana instigated the violence in order to justify the coup that he had planned”.¹⁶ Indeed the 1973 violence resulted in a military coup in July 1973. The same source suggests that the real problem in this power struggle was regionalism: between the northern and centre-southern. Out of the eleven ‘Officiers militaires’ members of the Committee for National Unity (Comite de l’Unité Nationale) that carried out the military coup, only two were from the south, none from the centre, while nine came from the two northern prefectures. President Kayibanda, most of his ministers and many prominent personalities of the First Republic were systematically assassinated. Summarising the antagonism between northern and southern Hutu, African Rights noted “Before colonial times, the two had very different histories – the southern Hutu were under the rule of the monarchy, the northern Hutu independent. Northern Hutu have long regarded southern Hutu as too closely associated with the Tutsis and criticise them for the failure to pursue a true Hutu republic. The more extreme northern Hutu even regard the southern Hutu as indistinguishable from Tutsis”.¹⁷

In the meantime, the refugees outside were having difficulties in coping with life in their host countries. During the 1980s, the Rwandan refugees, particularly those living in Uganda, were persistently subject to discrimination and abuse. In 1982-3, Rwandan refugees were deliberately victimised, persecuted by the then government of President Milton Obote, and many were driven out of Uganda. This experience convinced many of the refugees that their future was to be sought in Rwanda rather than anywhere else. But the then Rwandan government led by the late president Habyarimana refused to accept them back, arguing that the land was too small to accommodate every one.

¹⁴ Napoleon Abdulai, (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.3

¹⁵ In my area I witnessed the confusion the population was put into by the fact that a group of soldiers would come distributing matches and calling the youth to burn the houses of Tutsis while a few minutes later another group would come to round up the youth and lead them to prison for having attacked Tutsis and burnt their houses.

¹⁶ African Rights, 1994, *op.cit.*, p.13

¹⁷ Ibid.

By coincidence, Yoweri Museveni, a Ugandan, was recruiting and forming a rebel movement to fight Obote's regime. The Rwandese refugees saw this as a golden opportunity. They overwhelmingly joined the movement, fought alongside Museveni's troops, won the war, and participated in the leadership¹⁸ of Uganda from where they launched an attack on Rwanda in 1990. Their military superiority and the international pressure forced the Rwandan government into negotiations and though peace agreements were signed in Tanzania in August 1993 they could not be implemented because of fierce opposition in Rwanda.¹⁹

After further talks in Tanzania, on the 6th of April 1994, the aircraft carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down. Bloodshed followed in three months of killings. According to a BBC documentary, one million Tutsis and Hutu 'moderates' were wiped out within one hundred days.²⁰ Hutu extremists thought that the time was ripe for what they called the 'final solution': to wipe out all the Tutsis. 'Tutsi' extremists thought that it was time to do something about 30 years of discrimination, persecution and repression.²¹ The cost of that bloody war and the genocide that followed was very high: one million people are said to have been killed²², material and equipment destroyed, the country's economy ruined, and the environment degraded. Some observers believe it will take decades to rebuild the Rwandan infrastructures, to train and educate Rwandans to the level of before the genocide.²³ Killings, disappearances, arbitrary detentions that have become a daily routine in the post-genocide Rwanda are signs that the wounds and divisions among Rwandans went very deep. Those Rwandans who have been hurt by the tragedy are

¹⁸ General Fred Rwigyema, Major-General Paul Kagame and several other Rwandan refugees were among the National Resistance Army (NRA) that captured Kampala on January 26, 1986. In fact it is said that as many as 3,000 out of 15,000 Museveni's fighters were Rwandan refugees. See Dixon Kamukama, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁹ There were doubts inside Rwanda about the willingness of both warring sides to implement the peace agreements.

²⁰ In a 'Panorama' programme (broadcast on 7/12/98), BBC1 documented how the UN mission in Rwanda left innocent people in the hands of their killers.

²¹ The massacres carried out by the rebels escaped media attention and were less discussed as part of the genocide. Some credible witnesses say RPF has committed more atrocities than it is known. According to Seth Sendoshonga, one of the senior officials of RPF who defected from the movement and was shot dead in Nairobi shortly before he was to appear in the Arusha Tribunal on Rwanda as a witness of the Rwandan atrocities, RPF military commanders ought to have been brought to justice for their crimes against humanity. See *Document Manifeste du Mouvement de Résistance pour la Démocratie*.

²² According to Gasana James (a former minister for defence in Rwanda during the period before the genocide), this figure could be much higher than one million. His estimates are of three million including those who were killed by both *interahamwe* militia and RPF after July 1994. See *Dialogue* no 206

²³ Kamukama, D., *op.cit.*, p.68

numbered in millions: the survivors who bear both physical or psychological wounds, those who lost their dear ones, the refugees who are physically and socially excluded, and those internally displaced, uprooted by force and dragged brutally away from their home into camps.

Research has been carried out into this complex problem and people continue to search for the causes of the conflicts and to suggest the answers. Various views have been advanced to explain the conflicts.

1.3. Identified causes of the conflict

There is an extensive debate among scholars as to the origins of conflicts in Rwanda. The main views that have been advanced to explain the conflicts include:

1.3.1. Ethnicity

This view stresses that ethnicity is the central problem in the conflicts in Rwanda. It divides Rwandans into three different groups namely Hutus (85%), Tutsis(14%) and Twas(1%). On this view Hutus, Tutsis and Twas originated from three different places and belong to three different cultures²⁴. It claims that Rwanda was and still is a society stratified along the same lines and that in pre-colonial times, the Tutsis played the role of the lords and oppressors over the Hutus and Twas, who served as their serfs.

According to this view the pre-colonial inequalities and oppression were then carried on into the colonial period. When Hutus took power in 1962 at the time of independence, they sought revenge on their former Tutsi oppressors and the conflict of the last four decades was an attempt to redress or resist the imbalance created by these historical inequalities. When each of the two main ethnic groups tries to resist this imbalance and dominion, it finds itself an antithesis of the other groups, and hence the conflict.²⁵

The division of Rwandans into two camps, one of oppressors and exploiters and the other of victims was inevitably going to lead to many problems. Whenever social

²⁴ De Paternostre, B., *op.cit.*, 31

²⁵ Kamukama, D., *op.cit.*, p.16

competition is understood in ethnic terms it leads to inter-group conflicts.²⁶ As Banton argues, differences in peoples' physical appearance and history do not of themselves create groups. It is only when they are given cultural significance that they become a basis for social organisation.²⁷ And in Rwanda, ethnicity means on the one hand whom to hate, to discriminate against, to exclude; and on the other whom to include, to love and to serve. The same ideology was used in the period leading to the holocaust when Jews were presented as the possessors and intermediaries of wealth, knowledge and religion, arousing considerable jealousy and animosity which resulted in the competition between Jews and the non-Jews, intensifying the anti-Semitism.²⁸

In addition ethnicity in Rwanda remains a blurred concept that needs to be dealt with carefully. Not only it is not clear whether the three groups should be called ethnic groups, races, clans or social classes, but also it is not easy to tell who is who.²⁹ For DePaternostre, they should be 'races';³⁰ for Kalibwami, they should be ethnic groups³¹; for de Heusch, they are clans;³² and for d'Hertefelt too they should be called clans.³³ There was also social mobility in the sense that people could move from one group to another. For instance in traditional Rwanda, a minority of Hutus could climb up the political ladder and be part of the ruling class, thus becoming separated from the masses of their group. D'Hertefelt notes that there was no rigid social hierarchy of the three groups. Although political leaders were recruited from the Tutsi group, Hutus could be promoted to high positions, just as Tutsis could be found down the ladder among the lower social ranks and be considered Hutus. Thus mobility cut across the Twa, Hutu and Tutsi groupings. For instance the term 'Tutsi' often referred not to origin but to social condition, or wealth, especially relating to the number of cows they had. Whoever was a chief, or was rich would often be referred to as a Tutsi. A person who had ten or more cows was assumed to be a Tutsi while those who had fewer than ten cows could easily be called a Hutu regardless of

²⁶ Banton, M., *Racial and ethnic competition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.65

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.135

²⁸ Loewenstein, R. M., *op.cit.*, p.84

²⁹ For details on this discussion see d'Hertefelt, M., *Les Clans au Rwanda- Elements d'ethnologie et d'ethnohistoire*, Tervuren: Musee royal de l'Afrique centrale, (Annales, Serie in-80, Sciences humaines, 70), 1971; Kalibwami, J., *Le Catholicisme et la Societe Rwandaise 1900-1962*, Dakar: Presence Africaine, 1991, p.56; Delmas, *La Genealogie de la noblesse rwandaise*, Kabgayi: Vicariat apostolique du Ruanda, 1950

³⁰ DePaternostre, de la M., *op.cit.*, p.113

³¹ Kalibwami, J., *op.cit.*, p.61

³² de Heusch, *op.cit.*, p.79

³³ d'Hertefelt, *op.cit.*, p.65

racial background. Frequently also, because their roundabout way of telling you something was supposed to be a characteristic of Tutsis, the people who lived in central Rwanda were referred to as Tutsis.³⁴

The fact that there was social mobility between Hutus and Tutsis, inter-ethnic marriage, and the difficulties of telling Hutus from Tutsis and vice versa, calls for a re-examination of the Rwandan ethnic identities. This is why some have even suggested that the three Rwandan ethnic groups be known under one ethnic group or race: '*Abanyarwanda*'³⁵ (Rwandans) which would carry a unifying and inclusive meaning. This is an important step because belonging to one or another of the existing Rwandan groups means being socially included or excluded.

1.3.2. Colonial policy

Another school of thought denies any pre-colonial inequalities, and instead blames the colonials for having been the architects of a scheme that disrupted the supposed harmony and peaceful existence of the three ethnic groups. This view, however, accepts that the Tutsis had indeed through manipulation of the 'cow ideology' come to be the leaders, but that this did not mean any ethnic antagonism. It argues that the other groups came to accept the Tutsi ruling class for protection.³⁶ This view further emphasizes that the colonial power came with the system of 'divide and rule' which interfered with the process of peaceful ethnic co-existence. "It was Belgian colonialism that attempted to wind back the clock and made the Hutus and Tutsis perceive themselves as two different peoples, rather than as Banyarwanda".³⁷

According to this theory it all started in 1884 at the Berlin Conference when Germany, Belgium and Britain met to apportion among themselves the region north of Lake Tanganyika, which included the south of the present day Uganda, Rwanda, the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Western Tanzania. The three competing powers had different but important reasons to compete for Rwanda-Urundi³⁸ region: this was the strategic junction of three empires. The region was seen by the Germans as part of a German central African empire, by King Leopold II as a

³⁴ Quoted in Newbury, 1988, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

³⁵ Gatwa, T., *op.cit.*, p. 233

³⁶ Ntaganzwa, R., *op.cit.* p.57

³⁷ Amanza Ondoga Ori, 'Civil War in Rwanda' in *Genocide in Rwanda: Background and Current Situation* edited by Napoleon Abdulai. July 1994, Weekly Insight: Ghana

³⁸ Until 1962, Rwanda and Burundi had been one country under the name 'Rwanda-Urundi'

stepping stone towards Lake Victoria and the Indian Ocean, and by the British Cape-to-Cairo enthusiasts as the link between the British possessions in the north and south.³⁹ The region was eventually given to Germany, which occupied and ruled Rwanda till 1916 when it was forced to leave, retreating from the Belgian forces during World War I.

After solving the question of who was to rule that part of Africa, the colonial administration was then faced with the difficulty of how to rule such a troubled country. The answer was the 'divide and rule' approach; and the existence of the three groupings of Rwandans served as a good starting point. The Germans and then the Belgians strengthened the Nyiginya ruling class and used it for their administrative interests.

When the colonial administration attempted to implement that policy they had to decide how to tell a Hutu from a Tutsi. They resorted to physical characteristics to make a distinction between the three ethnic groups. They took samples, measured and weighed them. The table below presents the results of their investigation.

Table 1: Colonial classification of ethnic physical differences

	Tutsi	Hutu	Twa
Height (cm)	176.5	167.5	155.3
Weight (kg)	54.4	59.5	48.7
Nose length (mm)	55.8	52.4	50.7
Nose width (mm)	38.7	43.6	45.5
Face length (mm)	124.6.	120.5	114.7

Source: Hiernaux, J., *Analyse de la Variation des caracteres physiques humains en une region de l'Afrique centrale: Rwanda-Urundi et Kivu*, Annales, Musee Royal Congo Belge, 1956, pp.34-60

In 1933/4 the Belgian administration (the then colonial master) conducted a census and issued identity cards to all Rwandans⁴⁰. These cards specified the ethnic identity of the bearer: and after that, it was not legally possible to change identity. The Belgian identity cards assumed that all Hutus would always have the same height, same weight, same shape of nose; and all Tutsis would have the same height, the same weight and the same shape of nose.

³⁹ Roger Louis, W.M., 1963, *Ruwanda-Urundi 1884-1919*. Clarendon Press. Oxford. p. xv.

⁴⁰ Hiernaux, J. *Analyse de la Variation des caracteres physiques humains en une région de l'Afrique centrale: Rwanda – Urundi et Kivu*, Annales, Musée Royal Congo Belge. Tervuren, N0 3, 1956, 34-60

The Belgian administration's action, motivated by the policy of 'divide and rule' not only oversimplified a complex web of relationship but also ignored a number of aspects that were being debated about the social relations among Rwandans. The debate about whether Hutus, Tutsis and Twas were ethnic groups, races, clans, or social classes was not yet closed.⁴¹

Secondly, even during the time when the Belgian administration introduced the identity cards, there were few people who fitted the stereotypical 'Hutu' or 'Tutsi' physical types.⁴² For many Rwandans it was not possible to tell whether a person was a Hutu or a Tutsi on the basis of physical appearance alone. Sometimes Rwandans could tell an individual's group not by his/her height or straightness of nose but by his wealth and place of birth. For instance, as previously noted, the people of central Rwanda were commonly referred to as Tutsis, while a Hutu with more than ten cows could be referred to as a Tutsi.⁴³

Thirdly, in the case of children from mixed ethnic parentage (intermarriage has been happening since as long ago as the sixteenth century⁴⁴ leading to the estimate that more than 50% of Rwandans could be of mixed ethnic backgrounds⁴⁵), the colonial administration ruled that children should join the ethnic group of their father. All the post-independence governments upheld this ruling. This decision ignored biological laws according to which the father may not be the dominant parent in transmitting the physical characteristic on which Rwandans relied to distinguish Hutus from the Tutsis. This is why 'self-identification' has been an essential element of ethnic identity in Rwanda. The inevitable corollary was that no individual, if given the choice, would chose to be on the wrong side should conflicts between the ethnic groups arise. Many Rwandans were then subjected to internal conflicts about who they really were, who they should be, and to what degree they were members of their chosen ethnic groups. According to Deridder, people resort to this 'individual

⁴¹ Gatwa, T., *op.cit.*, p.78

⁴² Chretien, J.P., 'Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi', in J. L. Amselle and E. M'bokolo (eds) *Au Coeur de l'Ethnie, Tribalisme et Etat et Afrique*, Editions La Decouverte, 1985.

⁴³ Ntezimana, E., 'Le Rwanda social, administratif et politique a la fin du dix-neuvieme siecle', in Honke, G., *Au plus profond de l'Afrique: Le Rwanda et la colonisation Allemande 1885-1919*, Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1990, p.72

⁴⁴ Paternostre, de la M., *op.cit.*, p. 41

⁴⁵ Mahmood Mamdani, 'When Does a Settler Become a Native?' An inaugural lecture at the University of Cape Town. May 22, 1998

mobility' strategy whenever they perceive a possibility of changing their group membership for another which would provide a person with positive social identity.⁴⁶

In this very sense, as Blakemore and Boneham noted, ethnicity became not only a constraint, imposing upon people certain identities, but also a resource: a set of strategies for survival, for making sense of an unfamiliar world, and for drawing upon social support.⁴⁷ This is how, for instance, children from mixed ethnic background who were obliged to take sides in the conflicts were the most violent in order to prove their genuine belonging to where they chose to belong. Others had to bribe officials in order to change their identity.⁴⁸ These facts further complicate the Rwandan situation as in many circumstances, it is not easy to tell who is who and why such person is behaving in a certain way towards the other person.

1.3.3. Rwandan leadership

This view blames the post-colonial leadership in Rwanda for having failed to address the relevant developmental issues and for furthering sectarian politics instead. While they do not exonerate the other post-colonial regimes, this argument puts most blame for the current conflict on the government of Habyarimana. The implication of this view, advocated by Barrows⁴⁹, is that it is these post-colonial regimes which have fanned sectarian conflicts in Rwanda, using them as escape routes from more pressing political challenges. Habyarimana is for example blamed for implementing the same colonial policy of divide and rule. No Tutsis could join the armed forces and Hutu soldiers were forbidden from marrying Tutsi women.⁵⁰ The Habyarimana regime is also blamed for ignoring numerous appeals and continuing to bar refugees in exile from returning home. Taking advantage of the reality of overpopulation, Habyarimana argued that there was simply no room for refugees to return home. His words "the glass is full and I have nowhere to put the rest of the water" were described by one Rwandan doctor as an 'ideology of overflow'.⁵¹ In refugee circles this rhetoric made Habyarimana regarded as the most dangerous. He was blamed for

⁴⁶ Deridder, R. & Tripath, R.C. (ed.), *Norm violation and intergroup relations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p.10

⁴⁷ Blakemore, K., & Boneham, M., *Age, Race and Ethnicity: A comparative approach*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997, p.7

⁴⁸ McCullum, H., *op.cit.*, p. 5

⁴⁹ Barrows, W.L., 'Ethnic Diversity and Political Instability in Black Africa' in *Comparative Political Studies*, 9th July, 1976

⁵⁰ Abdulai, N., (ed.), *op.cit.* p.3. For a detailed account of the role of the Church in the construction and development of ethnic ideology see Gatwa, T., *op.cit.*, 1988 and Linden, I., *op.cit.*, 1977

⁵¹ African Rights, *op. cit.*, p.16

fanning ethnicity rather than trying to correct the distortions of the colonial era. From the RPF perspective, this war was not an offensive undertaken to injure the Rwandan state (this could make it an unjust war⁵²), but a defensive one since their rights of being full members of the Rwandan community had been violated.

In addition, the Habyarimana regime planned an ethnic cleansing against Tutsi Rwandans who were viewed as their enemy. However, for some Rwandans, to call it only ethnic diminishes its importance. According to Matata, genocide is above all political since ethnic Tutsis were killed because of their perceived nature as opponents.⁵³ For him reducing the Rwandan genocide to ethnicity not only reduces the crime of those who planned it, but also gives both Hutu and Tutsi extremists a weapon to use against their own people.

As far as what concerns the beneficiaries of genocide is concerned, I think that one minority replaced another minority in power. This situation makes me very uneasy because I had hoped that multipartism would have made people more reasonable and more realist. I think that genocide is by its very nature political. The ethnic Tutsis were globally seen as the opponents. The situation is the same today because the Tutsi minority believes that the Hutus will never accept their power. That is the explanation of today's massacres.⁵⁴

Twagiramungu, the Rwandan former minister, holds the same point of view. For him, both Hutus and Tutsis were victims of criminals, the RPF, the Presidential Guard and the *Interahamwe*".⁵⁵

Such a scape-goating strategy has been used elsewhere and proved to be deadly dangerous. The leaders in Nazi Germany did not hesitate to divert to the Jews all the bitterness and resentment of those disillusioned by their regimes.⁵⁶ As will be shown later, the post-independence political leaders of Rwanda succeeded in diverting

⁵² Davies, H.S.J., *op.cit.*p.148. In *Moral and Pastoral Theology* it is stressed that war is permissible only in the case of self-defence against somebody who had invaded someone else's rights. For this may be the only means of maintaining existence or rights or defending them. Beside being defensive, a just war must fulfil a number of conditions such as: declared by the state itself, necessary in the last resort after diplomacy has failed, must be grave and just reason for it and its method must be just.

⁵³ Matata, J., 'Une Responsabilite Partagee', in *Dialogue No 205* Juillet-Aout 1998. Joseph Matata is the former permanent secretary of the Rwandan Association for the defence of Human Rights (ARDHO).

⁵⁴ Ibid. pp.101/102

⁵⁵ Twagiramungu, F., 'Condamner tous les crimes et tous les criminels' in *Dialogue No 205* Juillet – Aout 1998, p.92

⁵⁶ Loewenstein, R. M., *op.cit.*,p.84

popular attention from the real problem of the country and its causes by making ethnic communities, whose features are indistinguishable, the scapegoat. Genocide, which was a denial of space and of life, is the most extreme form of exclusion. It is an annihilation of life, a fight against God, and an attempt to exclude God.

1.3.4. Foreign invasion

Rwandan officials blamed Uganda for the invasion of Rwanda by Rwandan refugees. In 1990 the rebel movement launched the military attack to oust the Habyarimana regime. This rebel movement consisted of Rwandan refugees and deserters from the National Resistance Army of Uganda. Rwanda consistently portrayed the rebel movement as a Ugandan invading force: "Until the last day of the war, Kigali was certain that Rwanda was the victim of Ugandan aggression, insisted that the Kampalan support was decisive, with American support in the background, denied that the RPF fighters were Rwandan citizens, sure that a large number of Ugandan soldiers were fighting in the ranks".⁵⁷ In June 1994 in South Africa, one of the former ministers in Habyarimana's government accused Uganda of supplying arms and troops to the rebels and appealed to Nelson Mandela to intervene.⁵⁸

Added to this is the argument about old rivalries between Britain and France. Having grown up and been educated in anglophone Uganda, it was feared that the rebels' outlook and social consciousness would be anglophone. Thus, when the rebels marched into Rwanda in 1990, the franco-phone neo-colonials, both at home and abroad, perceived the RPF combatants as anglophone invaders bent on annexing francophone Rwanda and appending it to the anglophone world⁵⁹. The role of French troops has been a theme of press coverage for a period of time and it appears in every piece of writing on the Rwandan genocide. *Africa Confidential* of June 20, stated that 'Parti Socialiste' sources in Paris had spoken of the friendship between the former president Habyarimana and Jean Christophe Mitterand, son of the president and former director of the Africa cell in the Champs Elysées.⁶⁰

Some of the proponents of this theory go even further and suggest a Tutsi conspiracy plan under which the President of Uganda, with the support of the United States of America, intended to establish a Tutsi federation from Uganda to Burundi in which

⁵⁷ Braackman, C., *Rwanda: Histoire d'un genocide*, Librairie Altheme Fayard, 1994, p.75

⁵⁸ Abdulai, N., *op.cit.*, p.31

⁵⁹ Kamukama, D., *op.cit.* p.26

⁶⁰ *Africa Confidential*, June 20, 1998

Rwanda would be a junction point.⁶¹ The argument about foreign invasion has been rejected by RPF seniors saying that it was old nonsense inherited from the colonial past. For Mazimpaka, the rebels consisted of refugees and Rwandans inside the country who had had enough of Habyarimana's human rights abuse, dictatorship and especially of his refusal to welcome back the refugees: "since nobody could speak and act on behalf of our people, we undertook to do the job ourselves".⁶² In a self-defeating argument, Habyarimana had conceded that Rwandan refugees and their children should not be allowed to be referred to as refugees all their lives. But such statement did not change his exclusive policy of keeping the refugees outside their homeland.

1.3.5. The World Bank and IMF

Blame has been also put on the World Bank and International Monetary Funds. This view argues that the dramatic deterioration of the Rwandan economic situation and abject poverty, are the result of the unbridled operation of transnational corporations and the intervention of the Bretton Woods Institutions.

A structural adjustment package involved the standard measures of slimming down the public sector payroll, liberalising prices and devaluing the currency – all of which entailed not only cutting into the privileges and patronage of the ruling circle,⁶³ but also the exploitation of poor people as corruption increased. One had even to bribe somebody to buy or get something he/she was entitled to.

On the advice of the IMF a government with a foreign debt of more than 1 billion US dollars, handed public services such as education and health over to private hands, and started the process of reducing the workforce in public service. African Rights noted that this had far-reaching consequences:

The implementation of the structural adjustment program not only choked off any possibility of new recruitment into the bureaucratic pyramid, but threatened the jobs of those who were already there. Low-ranking officials in the villages – including administrators, teachers, agricultural extension workers, health workers and policemen – saw their prospects of promotion vanish, and even faced

⁶¹ Braeckman, C., 1994, *op. cit.* p.75

⁶² Mazimpaka, P., 'Background & the current situation' in *Genocide in Rwanda, Background and current situation*, edited by Napoleon Abdulai, London: Africa Research and Information Centre, p.28

⁶³ African Rights, *op. cit.*, p.22

the possibility of losing their jobs altogether. Employees in parastatals who had thought that they were guaranteed a position for life were similarly overcome by uncertainty.⁶⁴

The IMF and WB intervention had more disastrous consequences for coffee producers. In the opinion of Marysse and her colleagues the intervention of these Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) has had knock-on effects that took more cash out of the coffee producers' pockets.⁶⁵

From the point of view of the World Bank, this restructuring of the price paid to producers was inevitable and welcome, as it brought producer prices into line with the realities of the world market, but for peasant farmers it made coffee production even less attractive than it was before. The fact that coffee prices have fallen dramatically since the early 1990s coupled with the imposition of a 'production quota' by the international Coffee Organisation, meant not only that the peasant farmer got less and less income but also that total government revenue declined.

The Structural Adjustment Program was criticised for pursuing the single goal of national finance equilibrium without proposing an adequate answer to the endemic food problems. It is blamed for having worsened the living conditions of the middle class, impoverished the poor and facilitated the flow of more wealth into the hands of those already economically powerful.⁶⁶ One of the inevitable consequence was that those who could no longer have access to public services resorted to violence to acquire what their neighbours owned.

When Marysse, de Herdt and Ndayambaje analysed the impact of the Structural Adjustment Programme on the Rwandan people, they concluded that living conditions deteriorated for 75% of Rwandan families.⁶⁷ Their analysis corroborates with that of another group of NGOs experts four years earlier:

In fact this programme aimed at solving government financial problems without any adequate solution to the food crisis. Thus it

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p.19

⁶⁵ Marysse, S., de Herdt, T. & Ndayambaje, E., 'Rwanda. Appauvrissement et ajustement structurel' in *Cahiers Africains no 12.* L'Harmattan. Paris. 1994, p.62

⁶⁶ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos, & Vredeseilanden; *Le Rwanda: Et Maintenant?*, Bruxelles & Leuven, 1990, p.13

⁶⁷ Marysse, S., de Herdt, T., & Ndayambaje, E., *op.cit.*, p.181

aggravated the living conditions of the poor and middle class while increasing the wealth of those already economically well-off.⁶⁸

In this sense the solutions brought about by the Bretton Woods Institutions could be compared to a physician who prescribes a drug that worsens the condition of the patient.

1.3.6. Evangelisation

Finally blame was put on Christian missionaries for having introduced and sustained, together with the colonial rulers, an exclusive policy which divided and polarised the Rwandan people.⁶⁹ Their coming almost coincided with the period of partitioning of the Great Lake Region by the Western powers.⁷⁰ Since the 1884 international controversy on the partitioning of that part of Africa went on till 1910, it is argued that when both the Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries set out to evangelise Rwanda, they took with them unresolved conflicts that were to have an impact on the Rwandan community.⁷¹

In addition Christian missionaries left Europe when racist ideologies were increasing. The ideas of the German philosopher Hegel were spreading fast. He called Africa beyond Egypt the “dark night”, “the uncontrolled natural will”.⁷² He argued that Africans lacked the “category of universality” that is present in European people, that Europeans could not understand Africans because Africans could not think. He denied that sub-Saharan Africa had any recognisable record of its past. Drawing from his argument that cultures were the concretisation of reason in its historical moments, he stated that where there is no culture, there is no reason and no history. In similar vein, the French philosopher Lucien Levy Bruhl (1887-1939) maintained that Africans were endowed with a “primitive” or “pre-logical mind”. One can only infer that such ideas affected, to various degrees, the perceptions missionaries held about Rwandans and the way they thought about their mission to the indigenous Rwandans.

⁶⁸ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos & Vredeseilanden, *op.cit.*, p.13, tr.Nz.

⁶⁹ Twagirayesu E., *op.cit.*, p.33

⁷⁰ It was in 1901 that Roman Catholic missionaries established their first mission whilst the Protestants waited until five years later when Pastor Johansen of the Protestant Bielefeld Mission first travelled through Ruanda-Urundi. See Mbonimana, G. & Ntezimana E., *op.cit.*, p.32

⁷¹ Twagirayesu, E., *op.cit.*, p.33. See Linden, I., *op.cit.*, p. 74/5

⁷² Gbotokuma, Sekeh S., ‘Negritude and civilization are not Paradoxical. Meditations on the 90,000-year-old bone technology from Katanda, Zaire’ in *Presence Africaine* (Revue Culturelle du Monde Noir. Nouvelle Serie Bilingue no 156. 2e Semestre 1997. Paris pp119-135

There were also divisions in some of the countries of origin of the Christian missionaries. Germany for instance has known three major divisions: First since the Reformation and the Thirty Years War of Religion the divisions have been between the Catholic South, with a third of the population, and the Protestant North with two-thirds, the latter constituting the backbone and prevailing social structure. Germany in the 19th century, the times of Bismark and Karl Marx, was much more dominated by a class struggle between labour (organised industrially in trade unions and politically in the socialistic Social Democratic Party) and capital represented by the conservatives. Thirdly, the divisions of the old monarchy into many jealous states went together with the development of nationalism and individualism of the German people. These factors show two things: that Germany was divided within itself, a fact that "made it difficult to unite the nation except in the agony of a common suffering like the war"⁷³ and that Germany was developing an ideology of exclusion towards those of non-German blood.

As Roman Catholics and Protestants approached the Rwandans, these antagonisms at home would surface in a foreign land. In 1911, for instance, German authorities regretted that those attached to the mission stations were for the most part not of German nationality. They were referring to the French element which prevailed in almost every aspect of life. Even the German members of the Catholic missions were mostly Alsatians for whom the common language was French which was used almost exclusively both in education and administration. So they noted with great concern that this preponderant French element and French mentality provided a base for neither the German language, nor German national ambitions⁷⁴. This cultural conflict also explains why in Rwanda the German authorities found the German Protestant missionaries more acceptable than the Roman Catholic missionaries.

Beside divisions within countries there were also cross-cultural and national conflicts. Relations between Germany and France were not good. Fearing that a united Germany would menace France, from the days of Richelieu, France sought to keep Germany divided. This policy of keeping Germany weak was consistently carried out; as at Versailles in 1919 by disarmament, an impossible burden of reparation, the loss of all her colonies, the imposition of the Polish corridor and the loss of her best industrial regions. The persistent aim of French nationalists was to divide Germany; that of German nationalists, national unity and fulfilment.

⁷³ Sherwood, E., 1933, *The challenges of Europe*. Farrar & Rinehart, pp. 5-6

⁷⁴ Roger Louis, W.M., *op. cit.*, p. 182

Another factor that characterised the early period of the work of missionaries in Rwanda was their previous experience in other mission fields elsewhere in Africa. The Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries in Uganda had had a bitter experience where the White Fathers had quarrelled with the Anglican missionaries in their attempts to win the support and services of King Mutesa. The outcome was very frustrating for the White Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church, who determined that the same thing should not happen in Rwanda, their next step in their work of evangelisation. So in an attempt to avoid a similar result the White Fathers rushed into Nyanza, (the central court and official residence of the Rwandan king) to get hold of the situation before the English missionaries arrived.⁷⁵ Their bitter experience in Uganda also explains the White Fathers' strategy by which, within six years of their entry into Rwanda, they had established mission stations in key geographic and economic areas: Zaza in the east, Mibirizi in the south-west, Save in the South, Kabgayi in the centre, and Nyundo in north-west. To deter any English influence that would come with English missionaries, not only did Bishop Classe manage to gain on his side the colonial administration and later on the king, but it is reported that he went so far as to make deals with local authorities to exclude English missionaries.⁷⁶

It is from the broad context of international controversy on the partitioning of the region, their ideological background, and their work experience in other African contexts, that Christian missionaries approached the Rwandan situation. Once in Rwanda, their policy was intimately linked to that of the colonial administration particularly in relation to ethnicity.⁷⁷ Roman Catholic missionaries, having been rejected by the Tutsi ruling class for the first period of their work in Rwanda, concentrated their efforts on the lower class and produced what Ian Linden called a 'Hutu church'. Discovering that they were losers in their hostile attitude towards the missionaries, the Tutsi ruling class entered the church, which caused the missionaries to change their attitude towards the low class, and they started to build a 'Tutsi church'.⁷⁸ As religion of the powerful, Catholicism was seen as openly promoting an ethnic ideology that maintained the Nyiginya ruling class in power and emphasised the ideology of Tutsi superiority.⁷⁹ In the 1950s Roman Catholic Missionaries made

⁷⁵ Mbonimana, G. & Ntzipana, E., *op. cit.*, p. 134

⁷⁶ Rumiya J., *Le Rwanda Sous le Regime du mandat Belge*, Paris: L'Harmatan, 1992, p.212

⁷⁷ See Linden, L., *op.cit.*, pp.73-219 and Gatwa, T., *op.cit.*, chapter four

⁷⁸ Linden, L., *op.cit.* p.33

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p.203

another u-turn and sided with the new Hutu elite, who planned and carried out the 1959 social revolution and handed power over to the Hutus.⁸⁰

At this time, Protestant missionaries were only struggling to be allowed mere presence since their audience consisted of lower social classes with no access to the ruling class. Linden noted that: "Evangelical Anglicanism entered Rwanda and the Hutu household at a time when the Catholics were turning their back on a national Hutu Church; it became for a while, and in a limited area, a new Christian 'lineage religion' in contrast to the Catholic 'territorial cult'"⁸¹

After independence, the Rwandan Church, the Roman Catholic Church in particular, has been accused of collaborating with the state in pursuing a divisive and ethnic ideology: "The Catholic establishment and the state were almost run as one"⁸² and churches' leaders have been accused of involvement in the conflicts.⁸³ Protestant churches remained largely limited to the socially marginalised sections of Rwandan society. It was only in the late 1980s and early 1990s that Protestant leaders started to be granted presidential audiences which were surrounded by secrecy and many Christians still wonder what was said in them.

In the violence of the 1960s and the 1990s, it was also noticed that the majority of the killers were Christians.⁸⁴ At this point one question needs to be asked: in such a struggle for social, economic and political interest involving every Rwandan from the lowest to the highest, what did it mean for Rwandans to become Christians?

However our suggestion that the Rwandan churches' conduct exacerbated the situation has to be kept in perspective. On an institutional level, Rwandan Christians knew that their divine calling was to be one as Christ is one with the Father. They sang love and unity and preached about it. In fact, the Anglican revival movement that occurred in Rwanda in 1935, made a positive contribution by emphasising that the Holy Spirit should be directed to society as a whole, rather than to the more limited realm of offering personal cures for disease and infertility. This enlargement of spiritual scale to the whole of society was unacceptable to the CMS (Church

⁸⁰ Mazimpaka, P., *op.cit.* p.42

⁸¹ Linden, *op.cit.*, p.206

⁸² *The Monitor*, Friday, June 10, 1994, Kampala

⁸³ African Rights, 'The Protestant Churches and the Genocide'. Available : <http://www.africanews.org> in *AfricaNews Online* [2/12/1998]

⁸⁴ Willame, J.C., *Aux sources de l'hétacombe rwandaise*, Bruxelles: L'Harmattan, 1995, p.75. See also 'Massacres au Rwanda' in *Témoignage chrétien*, Paris: 6 février 1964.

Missionary Society) which had only meant evil to be treated in its private, individual, familial context.⁸⁵ In the height of the 1959 ethnic violence, Bishop Perraudin preached a sermon on unity and love:

However, from the Christian point of view, racial differences must dissolve into the higher unity of the communion of Saints. Christians, to whatever race they belong, share more than brotherhood; they participate in the same life of Jesus Christ and have the same Father in Heaven. Whoever excludes from his affection a man of another race than his own when he says 'Our Father' is truly not calling on the Father that is in Heaven, and he will not be heard. There is no Church by race; there is only the catholic Church.⁸⁶

On the practical side, Protestant churches succeeded to unite under the umbrella of the 'Conseil Protestant du Rwanda' CPR which aimed at the avoidance of conflicts, frictions and competition among Christians of different denominations and collaboration in the areas of evangelism, education and development.⁸⁷ Its existence helped individual Christians to bridge the gap that separated them. For instance for many years, members of the Free Methodist could marry members from other Protestant churches. The CPR provided the opportunities for dialogue and mutual discovery. In the 1980s Christian preachers could be welcomed into those churches that traditionally closed their doors to outsiders, common co-ordination of educational activities was achieved throughout the country and the co-ordination of development projects, though difficult because of the competition for funding⁸⁸, was already underway.

With regard to the 1990s conflicts, it was the Christian church leaders, both Protestants and Roman Catholics⁸⁹, who broke the deadlock when the Rwandan government had categorically refused to meet the rebels despite their military strength and number of human lives that were involved in the war. On several

⁸⁵ Linden, I., op.cit., p.205.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Linden, I., op.cit., p.259

⁸⁷ Gatwa, T. & Karamaga. A., *Les Autres Chrétiens Rwandais, Presence Protestante*, Kigali: Urwego, 1990, pp.67-68. See also Van't Spijker, G., *Les usages funéraires et la mission de l'Eglise: Une étude anthropologique et théologique des rites funéraires au Rwanda*, Zetwerk: Wijdenes, 1990, pp. 27-38. Originally known as 'Alliance Protestante du Rwanda-Urundi', the CPR was created in 1930.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.97

⁸⁹ The working together of Roman Catholic bishops and Protestant Churches leaders was a boost to the Christian unity needed for the country. For years Roman Catholics regarded Protestant Christians as second class Christians, and the improvement of the relationships among the leaders was going possibly to filter down and impact on the relationship among ordinary citizens. But these efforts were overshadowed by the accusations that church leaders participated in the 1994 tragedy.

occasions church leaders mediated, at their risk⁹⁰, between the warring factions. The meetings in Nairobi, Mombasa and Bujumbura are examples of the peace initiatives to which church leaders immensely contributed between 1991-1994.

There have been also individual Christians who showed courage and determination in the way they dealt with this social, economic and political struggle. Bilinda noted 'I had seen that time and time again in my Rwandan friends –their patience, strength, and yes, even joy, in the midst of the most tragic circumstances, and how these overflowed in their lives, bringing comfort and help to the broken lives around them.'⁹¹ There were many who put their lives on the line and even lost their lives trying to save others.⁹² They tried to show another belief system that was undiluted by economic struggle. Putting their neighbours' lives above their ethnic allegiances, they confronted conventional policy of physical elimination and accepted with fortitude the consequent abuse, persecution and death. Indeed they stood firm as heroes and heroines among so many of their colleagues who floated with the tide, trimming and betraying the requirements of Christian love they solemnly vowed to follow, in order to obtain popularity and other privileges. For them death was impotent to intimidate them into the divisive and exclusion policy⁹³ The analysis we offer in these pages should not eclipse their contribution and testimonies within the Rwandan community.

1.4. The Rwandan Conflict and the concept of *koinonia*

Following the 1994 genocide, the Rwandan Christians, both those inside and outside the country, have not stopped asking questions about what went wrong. The role of God himself in the course of the tragedy was questioned: "Why did God not answer our prayers?", "Where was our God?", "What does He say about the Rwandan tragedies, past and present?", "Where was he when his people were being slaughtered?", "Where is he now in the misery and suffering of those who

⁹⁰ Any person who was seen as sympathising with the rebels or agreeing with their agenda could be easily taken as a traitor to the country and be dealt with accordingly. In fact, the first meeting between the church leaders and the rebels was a risky step.

⁹¹ Bilinda, L., *op.cit.*, p. 218

⁹² There were situations where Hutus and Tutsis Christians were asked by death squads to get separate so that they could know and kill their victims at ease. Refusing, Hutus and Tutsis were massacred together. Hutus who spoke for Tutsis were killed and vice versa. See African Rights, *op.cit.*

⁹³ Niringiye, Z. & Oginde, D., (ed.), *Ethnicity, Race and Culture*, Kampala: IFES, 1998, p.15

survived?", "Is He really in control?", "Why does he not do something about it?".⁹⁴ All Rwandan Christians had to grapple with these questions as they tried to live out their faith in God. One of the Roman Catholic Fathers who worked in the refugee camps commented on the theological reflection that nourished the everyday life of Christians in camps:

After 35 years of missionary life, (and 37 years after finishing my theological studies) I can assure you I have never had more lively and questioning courses than those which I lived through and participated in, in the refugee camps in Rwanda, Zaire and now in Tanzania, a theology class every day.⁹⁵

As Father Parets' experience shows, it was within popular circles that both theological questions and answers were attempted. Various thoughts emerged from this questioning. One theological thought puts God in the position of a disempowered and helpless parent who is present when his sons are fighting among themselves without being able to stop them:

God was among us, just as we parents are present when our children are fighting each other. We shout at them, we try to stop them, but it is often useless, especially when they are grown-up children! God is with us, shouting his command 'you shall not kill' but who heard him?⁹⁶

For Bilinda God has been deeply wounded by the suffering his creatures impose on their fellows: 'If my heart had been broken by all the sorrows, then how much more, I realised, must it grieve God's heart to see the people he had created, to whom he had given free will, use their freedom to turn their backs on him.'⁹⁷

Another thought identifies God with the victim: "Yes it was God crying through the mouths of the massacred ones: Don't kill me! Have pity on me! What you are doing to the least of my little ones, you are doing to me!"⁹⁸ In this sense God is dead, buried with the millions of those Hutus and Tutsis killed in the conflicts.

⁹⁴ Parets, M. Les Refugies Parlent de Dieu!' in *Dialogue* no191 Juin - Juillet 1996, Bruxelles, p.98.
See also Bilinda, L., *op. cit.*, p.217

⁹⁵ Parets, M., *op. cit.*, p.97

⁹⁶ Ibid. p.99

⁹⁷ Bilinda, L., *op.cit.*, p.218

⁹⁸ Parets, M., *op.cit.*, p.99

Another view contrasts the destructive powers and the creative and renewing powers of God. Maybaum, for example, sees in the three main tragedies that happened to the people of Israel an operation through which God brings a new span of life, a new beginning and revival of the health of the Israelite community.⁹⁹ The destruction of the Temple of Solomon and the subsequent deportation the Jewish community were followed by a decisive spiritual progress that subsequently resulted in a religious renewal when Israelites thrived for a new and genuine form of worship.

All these views point to God's concern for his people; his creative power among the remnant and survival, and his presence with them. They point to God's presence with those who died. However, they point also to the mountainous difficulties in attempting any theological reflection on the Holocaust as well as on the Rwandan genocide. How can he be shown both just and loving, present and at work among his suffering people?

The above questions beg another, a more fundamental question: How did Rwandans understand their 'being' Christians or their belonging to the Church. For Rwandan Protestant Christians the word 'Church' has two senses: "*urusengero*" means the building for public worship (sometimes including all the utensils and ornaments which serve therein for divine worship) and "*Itorero*" means a particular organised Christian denomination. The Roman Catholics maintain the Greek word "Ekklesia" which they transcribe as "*kiliziya*" for both the building for worship and the Roman Catholic Christian community. But occasionally both Protestants and Roman Catholics refer to the religious professional cadre, bishops, priests, ministers, deacons and others who minister to the Christian community as 'the church'. Consistently with this meaning, only clergymen or ministers are called persons of the church or churchmen.

Used in these different senses, some of the Rwandan uses of the word 'church' carried negative implications for the theological wealth that the word 'church' should carry. To use the word 'church' to mean the building or place¹⁰⁰ for public worship is the most restrictive use of the term. It resulted in church-related activities being limited to a particular place, a particular building, implying that God is bound to that particular place to which Christians have to move in order to meet him. This resulted

⁹⁹ Cohn-Sherbok, *op.cit.*, p.28

¹⁰⁰ At most times, Christians had to worship outside in the open air before they could build a proper church. This place was also referred to as the church.

also in the compartmentalisation of the spheres of life: the domestic life, work in the field relate to man's domain or the secular, while all that happens with the church's building relates to God. Emphasis was put on God's relationship with the space rather than with human beings.¹⁰¹ God was then excluded from certain places and from certain activities.

Again, the Rwandan Christian understanding of the 'church' as an organised community of worshippers fell into the temptation of monopolising God within denominational boundaries. Not only did this result in competition for membership, with each denomination emphasising its righteousness while undermining others. Brueggemann noted that such an attempt to domesticate God can lead to His exclusion from the Church. God resists any domestication by human beings. He contends that: "Both God's risk and God's new compassion-shaped resolve refuse and resist domestication, either through our certitude or through our despair"¹⁰² If Rwandan Christians prioritised their denominational or ethnic identity, rather than their Christian identity, one can ask whether and to what extent they turned themselves into an assembly of men rather than assembly of God?

Taking the clergy as the 'church' had the meant that members did not feel so much part of the church, in the same way as the clergy were; there was little room for, or participation by, lay people or the poor. The identification of the church with the clergy is one of the problems of the Rwandan Church, as always with a missionary church, and even when Rwandan clergy took over not much changed because they had been educated in the same principles, and were ambitious to get into the missionaries' track. The clergy continued to be disconnected from the members of their congregations.

The limited understanding of 'church' reflected in the terms *urusengero*, *kiliziya* or *itorero* contributed to various forms of exclusion with the Rwandan Christian community. In contrast, in the biblical sense the word 'church' bears the meaning of togetherness, worshipping together. The Greek word for 'church', *ekklesia* and its equivalent in Hebrew, *qahal* mean 'assembly'; the assembly of those called apart for

¹⁰¹ As a consequence most Rwandans kept in their homes the small huts in which they performed rituals to spirits of ancestors (maintaining their roots with the traditional religion) whilst proclaiming themselves to be Christians.

¹⁰² Brueggemann, W., *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977, p. 182.

a task.¹⁰³ It is the same word that is used to describe the covenant-making assembly at Mount Sinai (Dt.9:10; 10:4). Occasionally Peter uses it to mean the people of God (1Pet.2:9). When Paul uses the word 'church', like the word 'Christian', he emphasises the presence of God within the Church as community and within the individual Christian as a member of that community. Both are the temple of God (1Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19).

In the New Testament the term *koinonia*, which means communion or fellowship¹⁰⁴, or sharing in¹⁰⁵, is used to denote the fellowship of men and women who had made the Commitment to follow Jesus. *Koinonia* has no exact parallel in the Old Testament and it was not used by Jesus himself. It was a Greek non-religious term¹⁰⁶ colonised by Paul and latin preachers as they moved out and away from Judaism because it expressed the vital discovery that 'when we bless the cup of blessing, is it not a means of sharing (*koinonia*) in the blood of Christ? When we break the bread, is it not a means of sharing (*koinonia*) in the body of Christ? (1Cor.11:23-25). And this was to be the means of bringing unity to the divided groups in the Church, if they recognised it.

However in the New Testament, *koinonia* does not equal Church. For it neither indicates nor implies rules about how churches should be run. The *koinonia* that the first churches had went across class, cultural and national boundaries; it was expressed in faith and witness. Any Christian community can be a paradigm or an echo of the divine fellowship of the persons of the trinity.

This term offers not only a more hopeful and inclusive term through which denial and expression can be better discussed, but also denotes a community where equality, peace and justice are expressed and lived out. The term initially conveyed the idea of God as a partnership, principally in thinking about God as Trinity.¹⁰⁷ It was later developed by Paul and other New Testament writers to mean the fellowship

¹⁰³ Gutierrez, G., *The Power of the Poor in History*, London, SCM Press, 1979, p.190

¹⁰⁴ Sophocles, E.A., *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods from B.C. 116 to A.D. 1100*, vol. II, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, p.673. See also Metzger, B.M., *Lexical Aids for students of New Testament Greek*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969, p. 27

¹⁰⁵ Winner, G.B., *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek* (3rd ed.) Edinburgh: T&T.

Clark, 1882, p.250

¹⁰⁶ de Mare, P., Piper, R., and Thompson S., *Koinonia: From Hate, through Dialogue to Cluture in the Large Group*, London: Karnac Books, 1991, p.76

¹⁰⁷ Kress.R., 'The Church as Communio: Trinity and Incarnation as the Foundation of Ecclesiology' in Provost,H.J., (ed.), *The Church as Communion*, Washington: Canon Law society of America, 1984, p.127-135

and relationship among Christians. Early Christian literature uses *koinonia* to express an inner relationship between God and humanity; God's free initiative in communicating and giving himself.¹⁰⁸ *Koinonia*, an ordinary business word, became the inspired and controlling vision of Paul for a community not based on wealth or gender or education or heredity or geography, but on the grace of God demonstrated in Jesus and received in faith.¹⁰⁹ Although often translated as 'fellowship' or 'communion', its basic meaning was 'sharing' or 'partnership'. *Koinonia* signifies a sharing that is expressed in people, in the community of faith. And as Ian MacDonald put it 'central to it is the calling of the Church to be the people of God: as a community, it has constantly to answer that call'.¹¹⁰ Stuart D. Currie suggests that in *koinonia* Paul found a serviceable vehicle for expressing facts of relationship; it satisfactorily implied in a relationship of 'love, peace, steadfastness, goodness, faithfulness' as is shown in Gal. 5:22. For Paul these were criteria for engaging in *koinonia*, because all that is implied in this concept is primarily an attempt to describe not simply the relationship which God wishes for his people to have with each other and with him, but the essential nature of God.

In Luke 5:10 the term is used in the context of James and John in partnership owning fishing boats. This sense of having, owning and doing things together is important to the practical meaning of *koinonia*. *Koinonia*'s primary sacramental expression was the earthly Jesus' sharing of table fellowship with both the socially acceptable and the outcast.¹¹¹ The cup of blessing and the bread pointed to a practical fellowship among those who respond to God, sharing one another's hardships (Phil.2:13), suffering and joy. As Prusak observed, 'God's love and mercy were actualised and concretised in Jesus' table association with sinners. The Father's unconditional positive regard was expressed by Jesus' earthly relationships which effectively symbolised the prophetic implementation of the long awaited Kingdom'.¹¹²

In Acts 2:42-47, the term *koinonia* refers to the Christian venture of holding everything in common, the common pool of material possessions, which was

¹⁰⁸ Kittel, G. & Bromiley, W.G., (ed.) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol.3, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1966, pp.801-807.

¹⁰⁹ Tillard, J.M.R., *Eglise d'Eglises – L'ecclesiologie de communion*, Paris: Les editions du Cerf, 1987, p.194/5

¹¹⁰ McDonald, J.I.H., *Christian Values-Theory and Practice in Christian Ethics Today*, Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1995, 136

¹¹¹ Fuchs, E., 'The Quest of the Historical Jesus', in *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1964, pp.11-13

¹¹² Prusak, P.B., 'Hospitality Extended or Denied: *koinonia* incarnate from Jesus to Augustine', in Provost, H.J. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.89

achieved through the unity of heart and spirit. These two aspects - spiritual and material - of *koinonia* have to be kept in harmony: '*koinonia* in its passive or receptive dimension involves a shared participation in the Spirit of God's self-giving that gives rise to a 'unity of spirit' among the sharers which is the undifferentiated stuff of active or concretised *koinonia*. Signs and gestures of material sharing were the expressions of the rather undifferentiated and abstract 'unity of spirit'.¹¹³ Thus the model of *koinonia* is of paramount importance for Rwandan Christians for whom community ought to be the substance of shared life and belonging.

As a model for the kind of fellowship between God and His people and among His people, the word carries important theological wealth. It implies that (i) God did not create human beings merely as individuals and isolated beings but as members of a community and that (ii) there has to be a permanent fellowship between that community and God. These two aspects are inter-linked and give meaning to each other. In this sense the Church should not be understood as a mere institution or organisation; it is rather a fellowship of those who have been called together by their Creator to be committed to Him and to one another; Christ being the bond in which and by which Christians are united to each other, and automatically with God.¹¹⁴ Such a fellowship entails full participation in common worship, the shared realities of the ups and downs of life, mutuality in suffering and joy, and listening together to the same voice and inspiration of God.¹¹⁵ So to refuse each other social and economic space becomes an act against God's plan for humanity.¹¹⁶ It is in this sense that the Rwandan massacres carried out over the years culminating in the 1994 genocide were repeated acts against God's plan for Rwandans and a destructive preventing the realisation of *koinonia*.

As Forrester and Skene noted, the principle of *koinonia* is ingrained in five paradigms which it is important to reiterate: divine fellowship; the created fellowship, the pilgrim fellowship, the covenant community and the new covenant community.¹¹⁷ And the level of people's commitment to the realisation of *koinonia* can depend on how these paradigms are theologically interpreted and adhered to.

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Provost, H.J. (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.23

¹¹⁵ Moede, G. F., *op.cit.*, , p.82

¹¹⁶ Haan, R. *The Economics of Honour – Biblical reflection on money and property*, Genva: WCC, 1988, p.17

¹¹⁷ Forrester, D.B. & Skene, D. (ed.), *Just Sharing – A Christian approach to the distribution of wealth, income and benefits*, London: Epworth Press, 1988, p. 63

The divine fellowship is the source and origin, the indispensable condition of all other true fellowship for the Christian community. In this divine fellowship God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are in perfect harmony, unity and diversity. They are bound together by love and sharing; a model and source of what human fellowship might be and ought to be; a fellowship without domination, where love is expressed in lavish sharing; therefore where peace is total.¹¹⁸ God's self is defined by the relationship of love. In the trinity, diversity is held together without separation; but unity does not become uniformity. In Jesus the Trinity manifests His love by sharing of the human condition, entering into the fullest and most costly fellowship with human beings: 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son' (John 3:16). In Jesus, the Trinity is at work restoring fellowship and bringing the lost, the excluded back into the fellowship. So if the Christian community echoes God's *koinonia*, then there has to be unity and diversity in it, seen not as threat but as gift. *Koinonia* is dynamic, not static, and it gives the personal and relational priority over structure and institution.

The created fellowship emphasises the fact that God did not create human beings as isolated, self-sufficient entities, but as persons-in-relationship, in fellowship with God, with one another, and with the whole creation. This statement has far-reaching sociological and economic implications. The idea of a created fellowship is a reminder of the position of human beings within the whole gamut of the other creatures. First as stewards, responsible to God for their own development and for the flourishing of other creatures. This excludes any idea of absolute ownership: God's gifts in the creation are to be used, enjoyed, cared for, and shared for the sake of the community. Secondly as a fellowship in which all the members delight in one another and love one another. And thirdly within the fellowship the original and proper relationship is that of equality since everyone is of the same infinite value in the eyes of God: all made in the image of God. In fact, as will be proved in the case of the Rwandans, it is this order that is disturbed when hierarchy, ranking, inferiority and superiority, dominance and subordination take place within the community. These prevent members from contributing to the enrichment of their community and being enriched by it.

The pilgrim fellowship is a concept which dominates the Hebrew experience of coming out of the bondage in Egypt through the desert to the Promised Land. It is

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

also rooted in the calling of the patriarchs to the Promised Land.¹¹⁹ It presents God's people as a fellowship that does not settle down, that moves through a succession of challenges and goals. After each challenge and its goal, new situations, new questions arise and people's faith is kept alive by the hope that comes from the reliance on one another and on God. Since security lies in the relationships with God and one's fellows, accumulation of wealth, exclusion and exploitation of each other are detrimental and discouraged. The story of the manna in the desert is a metaphor of the functioning of such a fellowship: 'He that gathered much had nothing over and he that gathered little had no lack' (Ex. 16.18). In such a situation, hoarders are not only embarrassed and frustrated, but also reminded that the gifts and resources that God provides on the journey are for all and not for greed.

Koinonia as a pilgrim fellowship offers a model for which the eschatological dimension of the Christian community can be understood. It is a community whose history has no end, but whose relevance applies to the present situation. It becomes a community which moves out of the past, through the present, and into an endless future.¹²⁰ This is the distinctive 'already but not yet' character of *koinonia* when seen as a journeying fellowship though the divine fellowship is already perfect, and that is why it stands as the model and goal for the evolving Christian community. And as Cavanagh notes, there is a danger for the Christian community if this eschatological element is lost:

Secular history – the uniform, and literally end-less, progress of time which makes the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ ever more remote from us – has come to predominate over eschatology, with grave consequences for the church. As the church made itself at home in the world's time, the urgent sense of pilgrimage through a temporary world toward an eternal end was muted.¹²¹

If the Christian community is limited in time, then its mission and activities cannot survive time, and it is even difficult to imagine a long earthly future stretching ahead of it.

¹¹⁹ von Rad, G., *Old Testament Theology Volume One, The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, London: SCM Press, 1979, p.121

¹²⁰ Cavanagh, W.T., *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, p.223

¹²¹ Ibid. p.222

The covenant fellowship refers to the *koinonia* to which God commits himself in faithful love. Israelites became the cherished fellowship called to respond by committing themselves to God and to one another as sisters and brothers: 'I will be your God and you shall be my people' (Jer. 7:23; 31:33). This covenant has its origin in Genesis 15 where Israel's God came to make the initial and fundamental covenant with Abraham and his family. In this covenant, the promise is worked out in the practical requirements of the law, as it regulates the interaction of the people in their daily life.¹²² There is sufficient evidence in the Old Testament that God is concerned with practical life of the community as a whole. The ten commandments in Exodus refer to the relationship between Israel as a community and God, and among the Israelites themselves. The detailed regulations about day-to-day life of the community are evidence of the Hebrew conviction that God is concerned by their social problems. There are specific proposals for means, should things go wrong, to bring back into the fellowship the poor and the excluded. The Old Testament prophets used these to remind Israelites about their obligations towards each other. The Sabbatical Year, the holy seventh year (when land was to lie fallow and rest, debts were to be cancelled and slaves released) and the Jubilee Year, occurring every fifty years were both established for that purpose.

However, many times this covenant was broken and then renewed. For instance Deuteronomy 28:15-29:29 shows that on many occasions Israel made wrong choices and failed to behave as a people of God. But that was not the end of the covenant. Deuteronomy 30 then holds out hope, the other side of covenant failure, a hope of covenant renewal, of the regathering of the people after exile, of the recircumcision of heart. For Wright, exile and restoration, themes that dominated Old Testament prophecies, particularly Isaiah and Ezekiel, represent failure and renewal of the covenant.¹²³

The new fellowship indicates that the old covenant was in danger of becoming legalistic, external and empty of its original meaning. The new fellowship that originates from the new covenant is grounded in Jesus Christ as its Lord¹²⁴. For Tillich this new fellowship is known as the church, or the kingdom of God, and Christ is its foundation and centre: the 'ultimate criterion for challenging and

¹²² Wright, N.T., *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1991, p.138

¹²³ *ibid.* p.140

¹²⁴ Barth, K., *Church Dogmatics, The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1955, p.753

changing' all actual powers.¹²⁵ The new covenant, inaugurated when Jesus shared a meal with his disciples, was a covenant in the heart and an internalization of the love and justice embodied in God's original covenant, expressed joyfully and spontaneously in lifestyle and in sharing. The disciples represented the future Christian *koinonia* of faith and love, both visible and invisible, both manifest and latent, universal and undivided with regard to its foundation, Christ.¹²⁶ The new fellowship is inclusive and has at its centre the sharing in the eucharistic feast, in the dying and rising of its Lord, in sharing of material things and hopes for a better future.¹²⁷ As the writer of the first letter of John testifies, the strength of this sharing lies in its double and indistinguishable meanings: the divine and human fellowship. "We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1John 1:3)

For the expression *Koinonia* to yield fruits and not fade away with time, it has to be rooted in spiritual power. It must be implemented now, while expecting its fulfilment in the time to come. Its theological content is what makes Christian sharing distinctive from other forms of sharing. It is not based on human good will alone, but recognises God's involvement and relationship with the community in all present and future aspects of *koinonia*. The human aspect of this fellowship is deepened and sustained by its divine aspect, with which it makes a whole and unique fellowship, the *koinonia* of God's people. In our analysis, the *koinonia* of the Christian community recognises that actions done by Christians are not only for one another, but bear this transcendental and divine stamp, expressing an aspect of themselves as made in the image of God.

Koinonia is not an abstract idea. It is possible and achievable; though with great difficulty and not in its perfection. Jesus exemplified the concept of *koinonia* in the short period of his ministry. God's solidarity with humanity was made plain through him. He shared his life with the outcasts, those the Jewish tradition had pushed aside. He dealt with each person who came into his life in such a way that nobody was excluded. Everybody was loved for his own sake and not for the sake of ancestry, race, class, nationality, family relations, achievements or any other quality. He began

¹²⁵ Tillich, P., *Systematic Theology*, I., 238-240. See also Kegley, C. & Bretall, R., *The Library of Living Theology, Vol.1. The Theology of Paul Tillich*, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952, p.250

¹²⁶ Kegley, C. & Bretall, R., *op.cit.*, 1952, p.255

¹²⁷ Forrester, D. & Skene, D. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.74

his mission among the excluded, the poor and those against whom society had discriminated. He ate and drank with those socially excluded. Gospel texts themselves indicate that the disciples came from among the poor fishermen of Lake Tiberias and the destitute peasant class of Galilee. Later on Jesus' audience was made up of the sick and crippled, prostitutes and tax collectors, all considered to be outsiders and outcasts of their community.¹²⁸ By siding with the poor and the oppressed, with those who had nothing to recommend them except their humanity, with those who were excluded by others, Jesus showed that 'solidarity with the 'nobodies' of the world, the 'discarded people', is the only concrete way of living out a solidarity with mankind'.¹²⁹ It is this non-exclusive solidarity with the outcast of his society that became a sign of his inclusive solidarity with humankind. Such was the Good News, a message of hope contained in the reply Jesus sent back to John when he doubted that Jesus was the Messiah. 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them'. (John 11:4-5). Similarly the Last Supper is for many an invitation towards a *koinonia* in which sharing, mutual dependence and indeed dependence on Christ are expressed. Peace, love, justice and equality are some of the main principles that govern the functioning of *koinonia*.

In the divine *koinonia* **love** is manifested in suffering to practise love; suffering is involved and shown both as the expression of love and its fulfilment. This is most fully seen in the passion and death of Christ. Love makes God vulnerable and even powerless. Therefore Love is the key concept in the Gospels, the guiding star for the right behaviour within the *koinonia*. Christian love means invincible good-will, prepared to risk all for love. The two best-known parables illustrating the nature of love are in Luke's Gospel: the parable of the Prodigal Son which shows how God loves us, while the parable of the Good Samaritan shows how we should love one another. Love is one of the main ties that hold together those within the *koinonia*, and allow their lives to witness to a higher ideal than themselves. For instance by serving and loving those whom society excluded as unlovable, Jesus proclaimed the lovableness of everyone and the possibility to love God. And the *koinonia* becomes the family or the household of God in which "without love the knowledge and service of God is impossible, for God is love."¹³⁰ This imperative is better expressed

¹²⁸ Horsley, R.A., *Sociology and the Jesus Movement*, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1989, p.17

¹²⁹ Nolan, A., *Jesus Before Christianity*, p.65

¹³⁰ Forrester, D. & Skene, D. (ed.), op.cit., p.76

in (John 4:7-8) 'Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love'. For John Knox (as well as for Paul) the *agape* belongs essentially within the Christian fellowship and has meaning there which it cannot have outside. But although this *agape* is within the Christian fellowship, it moves towards the excluded to make them welcome and include them in the fellowship.¹³¹ Whenever Jesus referred to 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' it was in broader sense of including all people, particularly those society had already excluded.

For Tillich, absolute love can be transcendent, immanent, and universal at the same time. 'It has the element of charity, but it is more. It is has the element of community between individual personalities, but it is more. It is transcendent and immanent.'¹³²

Justice in the divine *koinonia*, the trinity, means the apportionment to each of what is due, if he is to be himself. It is in that sense permissive, allowing each freedom to act within his nature. Therefore in the community of faith, justice must include freedom to participate but also to dissent or depart. Justice is another aspect of *koinonia*. Justice is one of the concepts in the Old Testament with a central significance for all human relationships. For Von Rad it is the standard not only for human relationship to God, but also for relationship among people. It is even extended to animals and to the natural environment.¹³³ Ps. 89:15 and Prov.16:12 for example, reflect the background where righteousness and justice are the foundation of Israel's social life. The practice points to human behaviour as well as to God's attitude.¹³⁴

From the human perspective, God's people are expected to establish social justice in the community (Isa 5:7), doing what is lawful and right, and living as a covenant community of poor, humble, faithful who abide by their relationship to God and trust in vindication from him against their oppressors. Micah 6:8 reiterated this social law in these words: '[God] has showed you... what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to [desire steadfast love] and to walk humbly with your God'. For Niebuhr, the aim of the religious life is to worship God, but to do so by building a society of justice and peace, presenting a clear hope for the

¹³¹ Knox, J., *The Ethic of Jesus in the Teaching of the Church – Its Authority and Its Relevance*, London: The Epworth Press, 1961, p.92

¹³² Tillich, P., *Theology of Peace*, Westminster: John Knox Press, 1990, p.76

¹³³ Von Rad, G., *Old Testament Theology*, New York: Harper & Row, 1962, vol.1, pp.370-373

¹³⁴ Ibid.

coming of the Kingdom of God as the goal of human life and of creation itself.¹³⁵ Thiemann stresses that the kind of justice that is required from God's people has to be based in a steadfast love and in the covenant:

As people of the covenant, as those who have experienced the steadfast love of our righteous God, we are now called to a ministry of justice in behalf of those who live on the margins, those who are the outcasts of our societies, those who suffer oppression. As disciples of the crucified and risen Christ, we have a special responsibility to extend God's covenant protection to those who are vulnerable and powerless.¹³⁶

Steadfast love is of the essence of justice; 'justice proceeds from the steadfast love of our righteous God. Justice is the form that God's steadfast love takes in relation to those who suffer in the world: 'our Lord consciously pursued his mission of justice in the spirit of Isaiah's Suffering Servant ; he was self-sacrificing, non-triumphalistic'.¹³⁷ For people of the covenant, the search for justice must always proceed from that steadfast love by which God has reconciled the world. Indeed, justice must be understood as the extension of God's steadfast love to those who are most vulnerable and defenceless.¹³⁸

God upholds justice in the community; who acts reliably, trustworthily and faithfully; who acts to vindicate his people. Both righteousness and justice are action-oriented. And they were possible because Israel understood their nation's existence as bound to God who created it, made a covenant with it, called it out of Egypt to a Promised Land, and who renewed the relationship by forgiving its sins every time it slid away into apostasy.

¹³⁵ Harries, R., et al., *Reinhold Niebuhr and the issues of our time*; Oxford: Mowbray, 1986, p.61

¹³⁶ Thiemann, R.F., *op.cit.*, p.108

¹³⁷ Scott, W., *Bringing Forth Justice*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980., p.95

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.109. see also Beisner, C. E., 'Justice and Poverty; Two Views Contrasted' in *Christianity and Economics in the Post-Cold War Era: The Oxford Declaration and Beyond*, Michigan: William B.Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, 1994. He distinguishes five types of justice: *commutative justice* (which is freewill exchange of value in trade among individuals); *distributive justice* (which is the distribution of commutative justice systematically throughout a population by prohibiting, preventing, prosecuting, and punishing violations of commutative justice; *punitive justice* (which is the visitation of punishment on one who violates another's rights); *vindicative justice* (which is the acquittal of the innocent charged with a crime; restoration of victims by requiring those who harm them to pay restitution; and *remedial justice* (which is the restoration of persons to proportionately the same relationship they had before an accidental injury of one by another). All these aspects of justice aim at the betterment of relationships among members of the community.

Old Testament prophets present God's warning that His people must practise justice on behalf of those economically oppressed.¹³⁹ For Amos, justice and righteousness functioned in social critique. He pronounced judgement over those who trampled down the lowly and who forced the poor peasants to make exorbitant payments in wheat. The strong power system, which existed thanks to this exploitation would be destroyed (Amos 5:9-11) because the poor were excluded and exploited by it. Jeremiah, trusting in a God of righteousness (9:20), called for a return to uprightness (4:1-2). Isaiah urged that kings and people should practise *tsedeqah* which he took to be God's vindicating and saving action¹⁴⁰, but with implications for the way in which the vindicated, the saved should live, for the land and for nature itself.¹⁴¹ In this context, justice meant protecting the borrower, the weak and the poor against the lender, the rich and the powerful who were inclined to claim more than what they lent in the first place, who lived off the surplus exacted from the poor. Of the law that protected the poor and the weak, Jesus said he did not come to abolish it, but to fulfil it.

Justice is usually linked to peace and love. Justice is referred to by Niebhur as 'love distributed', provides the necessary conditions for corporate compassion. For him the lack of justice or injustice points to the death of love, and is itself destructive of fellowship. He argues that doing justice and loving are complementary descriptions of the same kind of behaviour.¹⁴² The liberation theologian Jose P. Miranda argues that doing justice and loving the poor and meeting their needs are the same because such an act of redistribution moves towards a restoration of God's plan for human life in fellowship.¹⁴³ Miranda's argument reiterates the injunctions of 1John3:17-18 for which love and social justice are the crucial ingredients of the required Christian expression to God and to one another: 'If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth'.

Tillich also puts love at the intersection of life and justice. For him justice is an expression of the substance of being which is love as opposed to an abstract law which is imposed from outside; a uniting with the self-realization of life as opposed

¹³⁹ Reumann, J., *Righteousness in the New Testament*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982, pp.14-17

¹⁴⁰ Beisner, C. E., 'Justice and Poverty; Two Views Contrasted' in *Christianity and Economics in the Post-Cold War Era: The Oxford Declaration and Beyond*, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans 1994, p. 62

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.16

¹⁴² Niebhur, R., *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol.II, p.47

¹⁴³ Miranda, J.P. *Marx and the Bible – A Critic of the Philosophy of Oppression*, London: SCM Press, 1977, pp. 35-72

to the negation of life. It neither guarantees any status quo nor a powerless utopia. Tillich argues that since justice is in the *kairos* (has to be not simply done over a process of time – *kronos*, but actualised at a particular point in time – *kairos*), love being that principle that actualises itself in the *kairos*, it becomes the unity of life and justice.¹⁴⁴ Love is the force which reunites that which is estranged¹⁴⁵; while justice defines the form of that reunion.¹⁴⁶ He then concludes that ‘the appropriate way of using these principles is not as within a closed system but as standards in concrete, dynamic situations’.¹⁴⁷ In such situations, Beisner suggests some criteria by which justice will be appraised in any given community: impartiality, fairness, rendering to each his or her due, proportionality and normativity.¹⁴⁸ It is clear that for him justice is not about the spoken word or law but what is lived; what governs people’s actions within their community.

Peace in the divine *koinonia* is the mutual harmony of the persons of the trinity, the mutual and settled understanding of those who love each other. The Christian *koinonia* tries to replicate this harmony by understanding what are, or could develop into, barriers to peace, and discovering ways of reconciliation: ‘for he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end’ (Ephesians 2:14-16). Scot notes that the dividing wall of hostility to which Paul refers may allude to the wall between the outer and inner courts of the Temple which separated Gentile visitors from Jewish worshippers.¹⁴⁹ Here the freedom which is basic to justice can be seen in a different light as it relates to peace – the freedom to renounce advantages or even rights, without expecting anything in return. Peace is therefore an important aspects of *koinonia*. The Hebrew word ‘shalom’, translated ‘peace’ in our Bible was used by the Old Testament prophets with a broad meaning and encompasses aspects of harmony, health, well-being, prosperity and justice as well as tranquillity or absence of strife in the community.¹⁵⁰ Old Testament Prophets painted a picture of what an ideal of community that would be like: ‘and each man

¹⁴⁴ Tillich, P., *op.cit.*, 1990, p. 78

¹⁴⁵ Tillich, P., *Love, Power and Justice*, Oxford: 1954, p. 24

¹⁴⁶ Tillich, P., *op.cit.*, 1954, p. 61

¹⁴⁷ Tillich, P., *op.cit.*, 1990, p. 78

¹⁴⁸ Beisner, C.E., *Op.Cit.*, p.65/66

¹⁴⁹ Scott, W., *Bringing Forth Justice*, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980, p.97

¹⁵⁰ Valley, P., *Bad Samaritans – First World Ethics and Third World Debt*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, p.221

shall dwell under his own vine, under his own fig-tree, undisturbed' (Micah 4:4). In the New Testament peace is so important that it is mentioned as the Jesus parting gift to his disciples: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and not let them be afraid' (John 14:27). Peace was also Jesus' resurrection greeting to the first women who saw him and to the distressed disciples assembled in a locked room. And down through the centuries it has been Christian tradition to greet each other with a sign of peace, as sins were forgiven, differences healed, strangers made friends and hearts reunited.¹⁵¹ Although this referred to inner and spiritual peace, there is an undeniable aspect of physical and political peace. There are also suggestions that Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey can be interpreted as a political statement, a claim to be the promised leader who would banish weapons of war and 'speak peace to the nations' (Zechariah 9:10). And 'if only you had known the way that leads to peace' seems to have been another reference to a community of peace, and as the absence of violence and war.

But peace is presented as an ideal that can never be actually achieved; yet there is a constant divine call and Christian call to pursue it. For Puls, it is 'always available, always renewable, unqualified and inexhaustible. (..) Our own human peace is sporadic and partial, hesitant and measured. But we have access to that gift beyond human expectations. We can draw on it when our own resources fail us.'¹⁵²

In the divine *koinonia* there is true diversity as well as undivided unity. The work of the Father, Son and Spirit are seen to be different but all directed to the same purpose – their **equality** lies in their equal necessity and value to each other. The Christian community seeks to reflect this in the value it places on each member. Therefore in material things it requires work for its members suitable to their capabilities, justly rewarded, and provides for those too young, old or incapable, with a fair and dignified living. There will be no discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race or religion, and the opportunities for education, training, health care, community service and leadership will be available to all. The community will be alert to discover the gifts of individuals and encourage, indeed expect them to be used for the benefit of all. Equality challenges other models of relationships which claim to promote fairness within communities. For the equity principle for instance, individuals can only expect 'to get benefits in proportion to the amount of effort or contribution they have

¹⁵¹ Puls, J., *Hearts Set on the Pilgrimage*, London: Lamp Press, 1989, p.70

¹⁵² Ibid. .69/70

made'.¹⁵³ The problem with this kind of fairness is that there are members of the community who are not able, physically or intellectually, to provide the kind of contribution others can offer; are not properly served. For equality on the other hand, everyone has to be 'rewarded equally, regardless of input'.¹⁵⁴ The individuals are served according to their needs and not according to what they can do. Although total equality cannot be entirely achieved, as a concept and model, it offers some forms of justice to the weak members of the community. It serves also as an ideal members of the community aspire and work towards to. Other concepts in addition to equity and equality which can affect social relations within communities are reciprocity and altruism. The former specifies that we reciprocate the positive (or negative) outcomes furnished us by others and the latter commands that people serve others without the requirement or expectation of reciprocation. Both reciprocity and altruism are positive elements for building good relations within communities, but can sometimes carry negative attitude such as exploitation and non respect of the receiving person. With equality however, material and human resources are distributed according to needs.

However there is tension in the ideal of *koinonia* between the 'already' and the 'not yet'. Just as the bread and wine of communion are 'a foretaste of heavenly banquet prepared for all mankind' so every step, spiritual and natural, towards making *koinonia* real now, builds up the **hope**, the expectation, of participating eventually in the *koinonia* of God. For Moltmann, the created community of God consists of a community open to the future, and able to preserve both of its existence and of its openness for the future of the kingdom of glory.¹⁵⁵

The fact that total love, justice, peace and equality are the elements of a *koinonia* people are called and strive to achieve but cannot be wholly achieved, makes *koinonia* an eschatological project which Christians pursue in faith and hope. 'Hope', says Peguy, 'sees and loves what has not yet been and what will be'.¹⁵⁶ As Daley argues, hope for a better future is an inseparable and integral dimension of Christian faith, and a condition for responsible Christian action in the world. It is an affirmation of real possibilities for communities and individuals; an awareness of a

¹⁵³ Brewer, B.m, & Crano, W.D., *Social Psychology*, West Publishing Company: Minneapolis, 1994, p.272

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p.240

¹⁵⁵ Moltmann, J., *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, the Doctrine of God*, London: SCM Press, 1981, p. 209

¹⁵⁶ Peguy, C., *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope* (tr. D.L. Schindler, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p.22

promise for the future which gives freedom to serve God and neighbours.¹⁵⁷ For Tillich, hope holds the past, present and future together in the sense that real love, justice, peace and equality which are impossible to achieve in the present situation, constitute the elements of a situation that has already begun but also the one hoped for: 'we hope, because maturing has already begun, but we don't know how far it will go. We hope for the fulfilment of our work, often against hope, because it is already in us as vision and driving force. We hope for a lasting love, because we feel the power of this love present.'¹⁵⁸ Tillich goes even further to argue that nobody can live without hope: 'without hope, the tension of our life toward the future would vanish, and with it, life itself. We would end in despair, (...), or in indifference'.¹⁵⁹ Hope is, for Neuwen, the only way people can survive apathy, boredom which paralyse and dislocate them.¹⁶⁰

This hope is one of the driving forces seen in early Christians. They had an ideal of community they thought was acceptable in the eyes of their Lord and endeavoured to live up to that ideal. They sold their properties and possessions, put the proceeds into a common purse to be shared according to the needs of each. In Acts 4:32, to the movement that brought the Gospel from Jerusalem to Antioch corresponds the reciprocal generosity of gifts from Antioch to Jerusalem. For Tillard, Luke demonstrates that even the Gentile Christian community had already understood the need to materialise the *koinonia*, giving it a universalistic and inclusive meaning which since Peter's encounter with Cornelius had become clearly one of the essential parts of the new understanding of the Kingdom of God.¹⁶¹ At a time of considerable economic strain for the poor, Christian communities tried to remain together as many fellowships in one so that God's love should radiate through their common experience. The collection among the Gentile congregations to assist the poor church of Jerusalem is an act through which the Gentile Christian community upheld their fellowship with God and promoted the fellowship with their brethren in Jerusalem. This act glorifies God and through it both rich and poor shared their blessing of God.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Daley, B.E., *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.216

¹⁵⁸ Tillich, P., *Theology of Peace*, Westminster: John Knox Press, 1990, p.186

¹⁵⁹ Tillich, P., *Theology of Peace*, Westminster: John Knox Press, 1990, p.182

¹⁶⁰ Nouwen, J.H., *The Wounded Healer*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1994, p.9

¹⁶¹ Tillard, J.M.R., *Eglise d'Eglises – L'ecclesiologie de communion*, Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1987, p.36

¹⁶² Forester, D. & Skene, D. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.75

1.5. Conclusion

In this chapter the Rwandan community is presented as a fractured community characterised by socio-economic exclusion. The factors presented in this chapter as having contributed to the breakdown of the Rwandan community remain relevant and valid and there is a continuing need to consider them in an effort to heal the divisions between Rwandans. Ethnic ideologies caused Hutus and Tutsis to hate each other, to exclude each other, and to kill each other. Bad colonial policy of divide-and-rule exacerbated the tensions, promoted and sustained exclusion of Rwandans by their fellows. Rwandan leaders maintained their entire population imprisoned in this ethnic ideology and exploited it whenever their survival and interest were at risk. Wars of the 1960s, ethnic violence of the 1970s and war and ethnic violence of the 1990s polarised further the fragile unity among Rwandans as exclusion in the form of physical elimination and exile increased. The solutions suggested by the Bretton Woods Institutions were as we have noticed, like those of a physician who prescribes a harmful drug to a patient.

There is still a need to probe further into the practical and social implications of these factors for the day-today lives of Rwandans, to provide evidence that the gap between rich and poor increased while the misery of those socially and economically excluded worsened, and to show how that situation contributed to the planning and implementation of the 1994 tragedy.

We have presented the principle of *koinonia* as an ideal of community and as a theological principle against which the social factors that contributed to the breakdown of the Rwandan community can be analysed. In our view it serves two purposes: it better exposes to Rwandan Christians and those of the rest of the world the social evils that caused the Rwandan situation to explode, and could be the foundation of Christian action for a better future for the Rwandan community.

It would be true to say that the seeds of *koinonia*, the hunger for it and efforts to achieve it, were there before 1994; there had been signs of awareness of what ought to be done in order to achieve real love, justice, peace and equality and efforts made towards it; but it was as if the seeds were not watered enough and dried up. It will become evident that the Rwandan community by being largely divisive and exclusive, was running towards its self destruction and counter God's plan for humanity. The following chapters expose the social factors that contributed to the breakdown of the Rwandan community; and the need for love, justice, peace and

equality as the elements of the ideal of a community. Then the responsibility of the Rwandan Christians and the world wide Christian community to work towards such *koinonia* will be demonstrated.

CHAPTER TWO:

EXCLUSION BY MYTHS AND IDEOLOGIES

2.1 Introduction

Rwandans converted to Christianity against a background dominated by myths about their origins and their relationship to the divinity. This chapter argues that these myths influenced the social and economic fabric of the Rwandan community before and after Christian missionaries brought the Gospel in Rwanda.

It traces the origins of socio-economic exclusion in myths and ideologies that present Tutsis as 'people fallen from heaven', and Hutus and Twas as 'terrestrial people'. It highlights the Hamite myth, preached by European explorers, that presented Tutsis as a superior race close to Europeans. These myths were manipulated by the Nyiginya ruling class to exclude other Rwandans from the possession of land and cattle. This manipulation resulted in the ideology of *ubuhake* or clientship, that is, renting out land and cattle in exchange for goods and services. In this system all resources were in the hands of a small group while the majority were literally excluded.

This chapter will also show how Christian missionaries endorsed both the myths and ideology of ethnic inequalities and indirectly the socio-economic exclusion which they carried. It will be argued that the failure to dismantle this ideology affected the expression of the *koinonia* of the Rwandan Christian community. The Hebrew experience, for whom the exclusive attitude towards other nations gradually gave place to a new and inclusive definition of the Kingdom of God, not limited to Israel alone but that included other nations, will be used to show such a journey could have helped Rwandan Christians to establish the foundations of a community of God's people, and not a community of divided and exclusive Hutu, Tutsi and Twa Christians.

2.2. The Myth of a superior race

The Bible presents Israel as a distinctive people of God. The Israelites developed a theology of choice and election according to which God chose them to be His own people. 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people' Ex.6:7 and Lev.26:12. In Deut.7:6, 14:2.21; 26:8 it is stipulated that Israel was set apart *for* God. 'you are now

the people set apart for Yahweh'.¹ These passages are evidence of the attitude held by the Israelites as a community that looked upon itself as a special people, superior, and different from others; as an elected and chosen people.² Wright noted that Israelite distinctiveness was both in (i) their own historical origin as a nation set apart through the election of Abraham, the national deliverance from slavery in Egypt, the covenant at Sinai and the gift of the land; (ii) their strict religious observance of belonging to a jealous God who does not tolerate nor compromise with other gods (Ex.23:24); and their particular ethics that had to nourish the social life of the community.³ They understood this 'divine choice' as something not available to other peoples.

The philosophy underlying the principle of choice was that the chosen were good, better than the rest. The language of dichotomy developed whereby a holy people was opposed to an unholy people, pure and impure. Non-Israelites were regarded by Israel as unholy and impure, pagans and gentiles. Furthermore, the same division occurred within Jewish society where pure and impure could be found. In either case being holy and pure meant social privileges and being unholy and impure meant being outside and excluded from the community. God was seen as the source of this division and separation. The covenant that God made with the Israelite community vividly expressed in the commandments is taken as evidence of God's loyalty to them and His demand to them to be loyal in return.⁴

This exclusive and tribal view that confined God within and to the Jewish people long continued to dominate their religious life.⁵ Each generation felt the obligation to maintain their purity as a race with the ever-identical yet ever-new task of understanding itself as Israel; the unique people of God. The same conviction was carried on even into New Testament times. For example, in the relationship with Samaritans is one of the examples of to what extent Jews held on to their Jewishness and excluded those outside. Jewish hatred and disdain for the Samaritans sprang more from historical and racial considerations than from any fundamental difference of religion. The Samaritans were descendants of the surviving Israelites of the northern kingdom who intermarried with the newly-imported alien population after

¹ Deut. 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:8. There are other passages in the Bible which refer this divine choice of Israel.

² von Rad, G., *op.cit.*, p.178

³ Wright, J.H.C., *Living as the people of God – The relevance of Old Testament ethics*, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983, pp35-37

⁴ von Rad, G., *op.cit.*, p.196

⁵ *ibid.*, p.121

the fall of Samaria in 722 BC. They never effectively made common cause with Judah, and in the time of Nehemiah the rift was clearly irreparable. The building of the Samaritan temple on Mt Gerizim overlooking Shechem (Jn 4:20) set the seal on their rejection by the Jews. Yet the Samaritans worshipped God, as the Jews did. Their authority was the five Books of Moses, hardly different from the Jewish version. Like many of the Jews, they awaited the coming of a prophet like Moses.⁶ If Jews maintained such an attitude towards their close relatives the Samaritans, their distance from other nations was inevitably greater.

However, such a tribal view of God was constantly challenged by and also co-existed with another that considered the God of Israel to be also the God of other nations; the Lord of the whole world. The story of creation suggests that God did not create human beings represented by Adam, as isolated, self-sufficient entities, but as community of the human race. In this sense what God said to Adam was to be told to humanity. The same universalistic view is expressed in the calling of Abraham: "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you (Gen.17:4-6)". The God of Abraham was the God of the World before whom the nations are like the sand of the sea.⁷ Human beings do not therefore exist outside that relationship with God and with one another; but rather belong to God and to the created community of the human race. God cares for other nations as He does for Israel. In Deuteronomy 29:10-15 the new covenant presents signs of inclusion and extension towards those who were not previously included.

You stand assembled today, all of you, before the Lord your God – the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel, your children and your women and the aliens who are in your camp, both those who cut your wood and those who draw your water – to enter into the covenant of the Lord your God, sworn by an oath, which the Lord your God is making with you today; in order that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you and as he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I am making this covenant, sworn by an oath, not only with you who stand here with us today before the Lord our God, but also with those who are not here with us today.

⁶ *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, London: SCM Press, 1990, pp.497/8

⁷ Tillich, P., *op.cit.*, 1959, 36

Some Old Testament prophets reminded Israel that God is the Lord of all nations. Isaiah 56 offers a turning point. His message is about God's Kingdom being inclusive; the covenant is from then on extended to all who obey God, wherever they come from.

For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant-these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them. (Isaiah 56:4-8)

The view of God as attached to a soil, of the pact of blood with only Israel, of God as attached to a particular tribe and nation was what other Old Testament prophets, Amos in particular⁸, rejected. According to Amos 3:2 and Deuteronomy 32:8, the God of Israel looks after other nations as well. Jonah's experience shows the mission of Israel was world-wide, to make the world's citizens active members of the larger group of servants of God. The Jewish Christians who understood their mission in this way maintained that the election of the Jews was not a final settlement at all⁹ but a starting point to carry the Gospel to fresh fields. As von Rad points out, the belief in election paradoxically presupposes a universalistic view of history and that it was only Israel which had learned to look at itself from outside, and for whom its own existence among the nations had become a problem, that she was in a position to talk about election.¹⁰ In this sense Israel failed to recognize that its choice was for a purpose; for a mission to reach other nations; that its choice was both singular, universal and inclusive. As Wright observed, Israelite election was not exclusive or inward-looking, but an expression directed to the rest of mankind in the sense that their existence and character as a society were to be a witness to God, a model or paradigm of his plan for the social life of a redeemed community of humankind, both

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Kennedy, J., *On the Book of Jonah*. A monography, London: Alexander & Shepherd, 1895, p.115

¹⁰ von Rad, G., *op.cit.*, p.178

applicable to the Christian community or outside it.¹¹ Therefore the choice of Israel cannot be viewed as favouritism on God's part, or a *carte blanche* religious justification for élitist claims of racial superiority, but rather as an act to be taken in the context of the process of redemption of God's fallen humanity. Wright summed up Paul's argument on this matter as follows:

God promised to Abraham a blessing intended for the whole world; the torah looked like preventing that blessing getting to its destination; the death of Christ has broken through this problem, and now the blessing can reach its destination securely.¹²

This inclusive aspect of the Kingdom of God, His union with and concerns for humanity is reflected in the New Testament. In Jesus Christ, God is reiterating His commitment to humanity,¹³ expressing once again His love for the world. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). To continue this mission, the disciples are sent into all parts of the world and to every nation (Matthew 28:16-20). Jesus, aware of the dominant view in Israel that God was only concerned with Jewish people, broke national boundaries and welcomed other nations, other people into the Kingdom of God. Perhaps it was the episode of the Syro-phonician woman which helped Jesus to come to this realisation! (He had said he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel). Yet in Acts, the apostles and early Christians were divided about the inclusiveness of the Kingdom and needed to be convinced that the Gentiles, no less than the Jews, have God as their Creator and were objects of his love. In Jesus Christ, the blessing of Abraham came upon the Gentiles¹⁴; in Christ God's inclusive grace came to give and sustain life in abundance to the new community; giving the *koinonia* its divine and social meanings. Tillich sums up the situation in these words

The limitations of space, the boundaries between nations are negated. In Abraham all nations shall be blessed, all nations shall adore on Mount Zion, the suffering of the elected nation has saving power for all nations. The miracle of Pentecost overcomes the cleavage between the languages. In Christ, cosmos, the universe is saved and united. Missions have a universal claim trying to create an undivided human

¹¹ Wright, J.H.C., *op.cit.*, 1983, p.43

¹² Wright, N.T., *op.cit.*, 1991, pp.143/4

¹³ Eka Darmaputra, quoted in Martin Labo, *Towards A Common Future through Option for the poor*, An MTh dissertation submitted in the University of Edinburgh, 1992, p.69

¹⁴ Wright, N.T., *op.cit.*, 1991, p.143

consciousness. Time is fulfilled in history, and history is fulfilled in the universal Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of justice and peace.¹⁵

This complete picture is important for the formulation a wholly biblical social ethic. A consideration of Old Testament social paradigm alongside the paradigm of the social life of the early church as well as the explicit social teaching of Jesus and the apostles.¹⁶

The Rwandan myths of superiority and ideologies attribute to the three ethnic groups different origins, different activities and different social ranks. One myth considers the Tutsis to be creatures of heaven who were expelled following a terrible mistake committed by their mother.¹⁷ d'Hertefelt presents the myth as follows: "once upon a time there was in heaven an infertile woman whose name was Gasani. This woman implored the pity of *Imana* God to give her children. God heard her prayers and gave her two sons, Kigwa and Mutuutsi, and a daughter called Nyirampundu, but warned the woman to keep strictly confidential the act by which the children came into being. Unfortunately she revealed the secret to her sister, triggering the anger of the divinity who then expelled the children into Rwanda. One of the brothers married their sister and they both became the ancestors of the Batutsi."¹⁸

For d'Hertefelt the myth that presents Kigwa whose name means 'fall' as the ancestor of Tutsis, emphasises their mysterious origin and strengthens their superiority over other people who happened to live in the country before them.¹⁹ In this myth Tutsis were referred to as the people fallen from heaven, *ibimanuka*, while Hutus and Twas were referred to as terrestrial people, *abasangwabutaka*.²⁰ De Heusch refers to the ensuing struggle for social position of the two main ethnic groups, rejecting the suggestion that the myth opposes 'the people fallen from heaven' Tutsis to the terrestrial people, Hutus and Twas.

Contrary to the assertion of d'Hertefelt, this myth does not in any way view the Tutsis, creatures from above, as being in opposition to the

¹⁵ Tillich, P., *op.cit.*, 1959, p.37

¹⁶ Wright, J.H.C., *op.cit.*, 1983, p.43

¹⁷ de Heusch, L., 1966, *op.cit.* p.83; see also Kagame A., *L'Histoire des armées bovines de l'ancien Rwanda*, 1961, p.12-22

¹⁸ d'Hertefelt, M., 'Mythes et ideologies dans le Rwanda ancien et contemporain', in J. Vansina, C. Mauny & L.V. Thomas, *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, London: Oxford University Press, 1964, p.221. Tutsi and Batutsi are used interchangeably to mean exactly the same people; as are Bahutu and Hutus, Batwa and Twas.

¹⁹ de Heusch, L. 1966, *op.cit.* p. 83

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 88

Hutus creatures from below. (...) The legendary account of the first encounters between the ancestors of the Tutsis and the autochthonous Zigaaba is significant. The social status (Hutus or Tutsis) of these first inhabitants is of little importance: the myth in no way exploits the superiority of the new comers; rather are they in the position of beggars looking for an alliance based on equality and reciprocity²¹

D'Hertefelt's argument and de Heusch's counter-argument are evidence of the ongoing debate and its implications on social lives of the two ethnic groups of Rwandans. Heaven being associated with God, holiness and purity, the inference is quickly made that what comes down from heaven is more important, superior to what originated from the ground.

The second myth identifies the Tutsis with the Hamites, a superior and civilising race of Africa. According to Seligman, the Hamites, whom he considered to be of Caucasian and Semitic origin, were the 'great civilising force of black Africa', particularly for the Great Lakes region that includes Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, the west of Tanzania and the east of Congo. He noted: 'no doubt it is at least in part to this Caucasian influence that we owe the curious mixture of primitive and advanced elements in the social institution of the interlacustre communities.'²² In his theory on racial inequality, Gobineau asserted that the Hamites originally descended from the white superior race in Mesopotamia. For Baumann Tutsis were 'White negroes'.²³ Hutus were referred to as second class citizens, slaves and clients to the masters Tutsi.²⁴ This classification of Rwandans into masters genetically superior and subjects contributed to the establishment of a culture of exclusion and exploitation.

Early Christian missionaries built their understanding of Rwandan social relations on the Hutu/Tutsi dichotomy created by myths and noted early explorers. In 1902, Father, later Mgr Classe, head of the Roman Catholic Church (1907-1945) wrote: "the Batutsi are superb men, with straightforward and regular features, with something of the aryan and semitic type'. Father Menard put it more blatantly that "the Mututsi is an European in a black skin"²⁵. Early Christian missionaries endorsed the ideology that Hutus were basically different from Tutsis, and that the latter were

²¹ Ibid.

²² Quoted in Gatwa, T., 'Eglise du Rwanda: Victimes ou coupables?' In *Dialogue* no 208 Janvier – Fevrier 1999, p.23

²³ Quoted in Honke, G. et.al. *op.cit.*, p.100

²⁴ Honke, G., *op.cit.*, p.102

²⁵ Chretien, J.P., *op.cit.*, 1993, p.138

endowed with good features and inner qualities for domination and rule.²⁶ Physical anthropology was called on to justify the theories of difference and social inequalities. In the 1930s the colonial authorities conducted studies concerning the measurements of heights, size of nose, faces, weights of Rwandans. This is how the Rwandan ruling class, the colonial power and the early Christian missionaries contributed to the creation, maintenance and justification of patterns of social exclusion where ethnic identity lost its values and became merely a symbol of exploited or exploiter. As Cynthia Enloe²⁷ writes, transformations in ethnic identities often result from “calculated decisions made by government officials (...) Political power does not just react to ethnicity: power can shape ethnicity”. The Christian missionaries and later on the Rwandan Christian community as a whole, by not challenging these myths, were inadvertently preaching a Gospel that could not easily take root in the minds of Rwandans.

Another myth builds on the behaviour of three brothers, the ancestors of the three ethnic groups: Gatwa, Gahutu and Gatutsi, sons of the mystical king, Gihanga.

Gihanga gave each of the brothers a pot of milk and told them to guard it during the night. But Gatwa became thirsty and drank his pot of milk. Gahutu became drowsy and in dozing off, spilled some of the contents of his pot. Only Gatutsi succeeded in keeping a full pot of milk until the next morning. For this reason, Gihanga decreed that Gatutsi should possess cattle and enjoy the right to rule. Gahutu would be able only to procure cattle by the work and services he performed for his brother Gatutsi. As for Gatwa, he would never possess cattle; alternate periods of gluttony and starvation were to be his lot.²⁸

This myth emphasises differences in behaviour of the three brothers, and makes the point about the Tutsis being favoured by the divinity. In this myth, Tutsis are given the unquestionable right to rule and possess cattle which was the Rwandan symbol of wealth.

The myth of the three brothers and their pots of milk presents some similarities with the brother stories in the Bible. They carry both curse and blessings, or choice and rejection. In Gen.4:2b-7, Cain and Abel bring their offerings and stand side by side.

²⁶ Dupaquier, *L'évènement du Jeudi*, 1994: pp.39-51

²⁷ Cynthia Enloe, *Police, Military and Ethnicity*, New Brunswick: NJ, 1980, p.14

²⁸ Taylor, C. C., *Milk, Honey and Money- Changing concepts in Rwanda Healing*. Washington – London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992 p. 39

Abel's offering is accepted and Cain's rejected. Abel is blessed and Cain is cursed, sent into exile as a 'fugitive and a vagabond'. Ham's son Canaan is cursed and condemned to be the slave of Ham's brothers Shem and Japhet (Gen.9:18-28). Esau loses his blessing to his brother Jacob, who is made the lord over his brothers, while Esau is made servant: "See, away from the fatness of the earth shall your home be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live and you shall serve your brother" (Gen.27:39-40). In Genesis 21:10, Sarah tells Abraham: "cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac".

An important aspect of the brother's curse or blessing is that whatever is decided for him also applies to his descendants. Cain's descendants will be fugitives and wanderers. Esau's will be slaves of Jacob's descendants. Canaan's will be slaves to Shem's and Japhet's. Ishmael's descendants will be slaves to Isaac's. Thus an enmity between brothers and their descendants is set in motion. Not only does it lead to cultural discrimination, but it also presents God as the source of inequalities among His people. Attempts have been made to explain the assumed inferiority of black people by reference to a curse supposedly placed by Noah on the descendants of Ham, decreeing that they should be servants of his sons Shem and Japhet. Implicit in such arguments is the assumption that differences are to be explained by tracing them back to particular events, the consequences of which are then transmitted genealogically.²⁹

In the story of Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, some interpretations extend the curse or the blessing to the activities and professions of the brothers. Cain is a farmer and Abel a cattle breeder. Jacob lived in tents as cattle breeder and Esau as a 'skilful hunter', implying that the curse and blessing that touched entire generations could also extend towards the activities of these generations. According to this interpretation, God, by accepting the cattle gift and despising the gift from land, valued the pastoral life more than the agricultural life; he accepted the herdsman and rejected the farmer.³⁰

Looking at the brothers' stories from this perspective corresponds to the Rwandan myth that justifies the hierarchy of the three ethnic groups as the result of their ancestors' conduct. It also sustains the habit of putting individual crimes on entire

²⁹ Banton, M., *op.cit.*, 1983, p.39

³⁰ von Rad, G., *op.cit.*, p.159

families and their generation. In fact the Rwandan practice of *guhora* 'vengeance' has its roots in this interpretation. When somebody was murdered, the logic was to find a member in the family of the murderer (in most cases the murderer went into hiding) and kill him or her to avenge the victim.

In the Rwandan myth of the three brothers as well as in the myth of origin reported by Coupez and Kamanzi, cattle are associated with blessing and were given to the Tutsis by *Imaana* (God).³¹ In another version, it is asserted that it was the Tutsi who first introduced cattle to Rwanda: "when they arrived at Mubari, Kigwa, Mutuutsi and their sister were very impoverished. God had pity on them and sent them fire, seeds, blacksmith's tools and animals".³² For De Heusch, it is Gihanga (a mystical person who founded Rwanda) who gave hoes to the Hutu agriculturists and cows to the pastoralist Tutsi.³³ Nkulikiyumfura seems to confirm that even historically, cows were introduced in Rwanda by the Tutsis. He does not refer to a divine origin of cattle³⁴. Bourgois questions the foundation of this argument:

The Batutsi claim that they were the first to have introduced the cow to Ruanda-Urundi, but there is nothing to suggest that this ruminant did not exist there before their arrival. Some small animals with short horns, the inkuku, were referred to by the Batutsi themselves as being distinctive of the Bahutu.³⁵

The superiority of the pastoral way of life over the agricultural life was supported by the importance and value of cattle in Rwandan society. Traditionally, cattle had many functions. For the purpose of this study we refer only to three of them. Firstly cattle were a means by which men could enter into communication with the spiritual world.³⁶ In the words of Father Grazzolara they supplied "the link between the perceptible and the transcendental." Through cattle one could enter into communication with God "*Imaana*" (Supreme being, merciful and unreachable). This communication consisted of a number of rituals which could conveniently be classified into 'domestic' or 'private', and 'public' or 'communal'. Domestic rituals

³¹ Coupez, A. & Kamanzi, T., *Recits historiques Rwanda*, Musee royale de l'Afrique centrale, Tervuren, 1962, pp.79-83

³² D'Hertefelt, M., 1964, *op.cit.* p.222

³³ De Heusch, L., 1982, *op.cit.*, pp53-54

³⁴ Nkulikiyumfura, N., *Le gros betail et la societe rwandaise, evolution historique: des XII-XIVe siecles a 1958*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994, p.22

³⁵ Bourgois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi*, t.2, La Coutume, 1954, p.267

³⁶ De Heusch, L., 1982, *op.cit.*, describes thoroughly the rituals and procedures associated with this communication between the material world and spiritual worlds.

concerned mainly the 'spirits of the dead' (*abazimu*), while communal rituals were directed to the spirits of Rwandan ritual leaders (*Nyabingi* and *Ryangombe*) who were endowed with some power to influence the welfare of entire communities, and were beyond the spirits of the dead. Although the *abazimu* were 'of the other world', they were closely linked with the 'living world' both by their being recognised and constantly propitiated, and by their constant interference in its affairs. The *abazimu* could interfere in the world of the living in a variety of ways. They were capable of making babies cry excessively to force the parents to worry and sacrifice something; they could cause all sorts of minor accidents and even some major illnesses. The particular *abazimu* involved in any case and the reason for the mishap were established by divination.³⁷

Secondly, beside ritual functions cattle products such as meat and milk³⁸ offered to Rwandans a healthy diet; though sometimes the products were reserved for special occasions. Other products, such as dung, urine, and hides³⁹ were also important; they appeared frequently in ritual contexts and served for medicinal purposes. For example cow's urine was often used directly as a remedy or mixed with other substances in popular medicine. Bovine blood was sometimes drunk by a woman who had just given birth. A cow was bled and then the blood was added to the juice of cooked meat. The woman drank the mixture with the intention of restoring the blood that she lost during parturition. The blood was also believed to help provoke the new mother's lactation.⁴⁰ The competitive value of cattle products survived government attempts to put both pastoral and agricultural products on the same level. De Paternostre wrote in the early 1980s:

In fact the contempt of the ancient Hamites for a sedentary and material civilisation, and the survival of their final confidence only in a pastoral nomadic and independent civilisation was kept alive until just a few years ago: Some Tutsis prided themselves on feeding themselves only on milk products or beer.⁴¹

³⁷ De Heusch, L., 1982, *op.cit.* p.106

³⁸ Some of the rituals and ways milk was used included bride-wealth gifts exchange, royal rituals such as the designation of the new king and the queen mother. On this occasion the king indicated the future queen mother by pouring milk into her churn, meaning that the product of her womb (the next king) had been his most important procreation.

³⁹ Hides were mostly used for clothing and normally by mothers to carry their babies on their backs.

⁴⁰ Taylor, C., *op.cit.*, p.73

⁴¹ Paternostre, de la M., *op. cit.* p. 50

Thirdly the use of cattle for dowry is of particular importance. In Rwanda, the practice of dowry goes back to the early days of the establishment of the kingdom of Rwanda. As Taylor noted, it is in the myth of Gihanga that, for the first time, the son-in-law brought a cow to his father-in-law.⁴² The fact that bride-wealth consisted of a number of cows and goats was very significant, and the term *Umukobwa* which is the translation of 'girl' points to the wish that she will bring her family many cows in the form of dowry. Girls' names referred to cattle *Munganyinka* (she is equal to cows), *Uzagirinka* (I wish her to own cows), *Mukobwajana* (she is worthy of a hundred cows) in the hope that they would attract many cows to their families.

Accounts relating to the ethnicisation of cattle went hand in hand with those of day-to-day activities of the three ethnic groups. Hutus, Tutsis and Twas still continue to be referred to as having different activities. The Hutu had the monopoly of the cultivation of a variety of crops ranging from sorghums, bulrush millet, beans, potatoes, bananas and maize. The Batwa produced pots and other clay products which they sold or exchanged for items produced by the other two ethnic groups, and the Tutsi held the monopoly of cattle.⁴³ A hierarchy of activities was then established; the most esteemed labour was cattle breeding which did not involve the earth⁴⁴, and the least respected labour was that which directly involved the earth, pottery making, the commonest occupation of the Twa. The labour of the Hutu was halfway between these two extremes, for their use of tools while working the land avoided their direct contact with it.⁴⁵ Paternostre observed "a certain disdain on the part of the Tutsis for agricultural labour and craft work".⁴⁶

The hierarchy of activities was intimately linked to that of products: first came cattle products (milk, meat and skins), then agricultural products and at the bottom came earthen-ware products (pots, and other clay objects). It was also alleged that Hutus consumed more grains and vegetable foodstuffs than Tutsis and more goat meat and that Hutus' overall diet was more solid than liquid because they had less access to milk and the various alcoholic beverages available to the dominant Tutsi cattle owners. Tutsis on the other hand consumed a diet almost exclusively⁴⁷ of liquids,

⁴² Taylor, C., *op. cit.*, p. 30

⁴³ Kamukama, D., *op.cit.*, p.17

⁴⁴ Although Taylor's association of earth with impurity is not very clear the fact remains that labouring work was undervalued.

⁴⁵ Taylor, C. *op. cit.* p. 38/9

⁴⁶ Paternostre, de la M., *op.ct.*, 1972, p.50

⁴⁷ Although they would occasionally eat beef and solid vegetable foods, their diet was more liquid than solid. See d'Hertefeldt, M., and Coupeze, A., *La royauté sacrée de l'ancien Rwanda. Texte*,

especially milk and beer. In the exchange of produce, it is important to note that Tutsi lords, by putting their food at the top of the hierarchy of consumer goods⁴⁸, managed to impose the notion that their diet was the highest standard to aspire to.

These myths about the social position of the three ethnic groups have something in common with the brothers stories in the Bible. They point to one brother being favoured, being preferred, being endowed with the right to rule, to possess and dominate. Nowhere else are the implications of such myths more apparent than in Rwandan society. They served the pre-colonial and colonial ruling class as justification for the monopoly held on power and state resources. The Rwandan Christian community which was inaugurated from the perspective of the ruling class did not escape the inevitable entanglement. The mentality that authority and leadership are intrinsically linked to wealth and riches dominates the way both political and church leaders conduct themselves, and just as the king of Rwanda and his chiefs saw themselves as owning the people, the lands and the cattle in their jurisdiction, so do the post-colonial authorities.

To use the Rwandan myths and the stories in Genesis about the curse and blessings for discrimination, domination and exclusion is to misinterpret them. For Von Rad, the basis of God's preference lies neither in the ritual nor in Cain's attitude; the story points to the variety of cultural occupations that necessitates of a variety of cults as well. For him the decision in favour of Abel's sacrifice is not connected with humanly reasonable logic. The important aspect of the story, Von Rad argues, is that God is on the spot immediately after the act and His concern of the life of the victim. For Von Rad, the 'where are you?' question as initially asked to Adam during the fall, which changed into 'where is your brother?' point to the social dimension of God's concern.⁴⁹ What Cain denied to be his responsibility is what he should have been doing: being the shepherd of his brother. That the blood of the murdered man had raised a cry of complaint that went directly before God's throne shows the intimate relationship within this early fellowship that had just started to grow: Eve, Adam, Abel, Cain and God: a microcosm of the community, the household of God.

For Haan, Cain stands for an attitude towards God and towards the neighbour. His fault was that he thought he did not need to have anything to do with his brother

traduction et commentaire de son rituel, Tervuren: Musee royal de l'Afrique centrale, Annales, Sciences humaines, 52, 1964, p.17

⁴⁸ d'Hertefeldt, M. & Coupez, A., 1964, *op.cit.* p.17

⁴⁹ Von Rad Gerhard, *Genesis-A Commentary*, London: SCM Press, 1967, p.102

Abel, he closed his heart against him and against God. Instead of being a protector of his brother he refused to relate, he wanted to stand apart from Abel and from God.⁵⁰ The crisis in Cain's relationship with his brother is emphasised by the retort 'Am I my brother's keeper?' meaning that Abel ought to take care of himself. Jacques Ellul, theologian and cultural philosopher, points out that the brokenness of Cain's relationship with Abel was at the same time the brokenness of the relationship between Cain and God. As far as justice is concerned, Ellul concludes that 'our oppressed neighbour is, in terms of our relationship with God, always the righteous one'.⁵¹

The coming of Christ continued this inclusiveness of the Kingdom of God. Jesus was sent to the world because God loves the world so much (John 3:16). Jesus sent His disciples to the world, to all nations because he wanted all peoples to hear the Good News. Peter who had resisted the fact that the gentiles were being drawn into Christianity eventually recognised the inclusiveness of the Gospel. Paul pioneered and defended wholeheartedly this mission to the Gentiles. Thus while the Biblical theology shows a trend of movement from the tribal and exclusive view of the kingdom of God towards the inclusiveness of the Kingdom, there is enough evidence to suggest that the Rwandan Christianity did not appropriate this theological perception and therefore did not make much progress from the myths that emphasised differences and exclusion.

Interestingly, it would have been possible to build positive interpretations from the mystical presentation of the three ethnic groups as brothers. There is first their common parenthood. The myth gives them the same father which is an important and uniting factor. This aspect of the myth could have helped the building of the *koinonia* among Rwandan Christians. Therefore the shoots of *koinonia* could even be found in the same myth that was used to destroy it. Secondly, the three pots of milk in the Rwandan myth of origin could carry an important theological meaning; the gifts being an expression of the relationship between the divinity and the brothers. A re-interpretation of the myths, particularly the myth of the three brothers, would be helpful for the principle of *koinonia*, emphasising brotherhood, common parenthood and subsequent sharing.

⁵⁰ Haan, R., *op.cit.*, p.14

⁵¹ Ellul, J., *The Meaning of the City*, quoted in Haan R., *op.cit.*, p.14

Socially historical evidence suggests that since their encounter the three ethnic groups exchanged their products and eventually ended up even performing the same kind of activities. According to d'Hertefelt, on their encounter, Hutus and Twas (already living in the country) asked whether they could have some of the cows. The answer was in the affirmative on condition that they taught the Tutsis how to cultivate.⁵² It was this relationship, which was constantly threatened by ethnic extremism and social exclusion, the Christian Gospel should have emphasised. Social exclusion was propagated instead, in the construction of an exclusive ideology represented by the ownership of cattle; an ideology according to which the pastoral way of life was superior to the agricultural way of life. In de Heusch's words, "a class of agriculturists was subordinated to that of cattle owners"⁵³. But this subordination had the serious social and economic results which are examined below.

2.3. *Ubugake* as an ideological tool for exclusion

The Rwandan experience with land-ownership and social exclusion differs from the Hebrew experience. Their uncompromising self-understanding as a community in which God participated⁵⁴ had far-reaching social implications for the day-to-day life of Israelites.⁵⁵ It was a community created and brought into existence by God, called together towards a common destiny and ruled by a series of covenants. The commandments, the other laws in the Old Testament and the Gospels demand practical expressions of love to be directed to God and neighbour.

Exclusion from land would have been difficult to conceive in the Hebrew tradition where it was held that, although God had given the land to Israel, it was still God's land: 'the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants' (Leviticus 25:23). No Israelite had the right either to treat his own land as if he owned it, in the sense of being able to do as he liked with it, or to lay claim to the land of any other Israelite, except according to the laws of inheritance and kinship. God was the king and was the ultimate owner of what the Israelite had.⁵⁶ God was given the role of a landowner and the Israelites his dependent tenants. Wright noted that this recognition

⁵² D'Hertefelt, 1964, *op. cit.*, p.222

⁵³ de Heusch, L., 1966, *op.cit.*, p. 15

⁵⁴ Haan, R., *op.cit.*, p.36

⁵⁵ von Rad, G., *op.cit.*, p.299

⁵⁶ Wright, C.J.H., *Living as the people of God, The relevance of Old Testament ethics*, Philadelphia: Inter-varsity Press, 1983, p.58

of God as the owner and giver of land contained many elements that shaped God-Israelite relationship. Israel accepts its dependency on God, Israel recognises God's dependability, in land Israel finds a proof of its relationship with God and only within this framework do individual property rights have meaning.⁵⁷ As Brueggemann observed, without God, Israel would not have got land, and without land they would not have become a nation:

The land for which Israel yearns and which it remembers is never unclaimed space but is always a place with Yahweh, a place well filled with memories of life with him and promise from him and vows to him. It is land that provides the central assurance to Israel of its historicity, that it will be and always must be concerned with actual rootage in a place which is a repository for commitment and therefore identity.⁵⁸

The concept of divine ownership of land impacted on the Israelite relationship with God and with one another. As any tenant, Israelites were expected to be loyal and obedient so that God's authority and protection would not be withdrawn. The land was not theirs to use as they wished; they needed to be careful what they did on it and with it.⁵⁹ The relationship between God and Israel was rooted in the belief that God owned the land and demanded accountability in the use of it from the tenants, the Israelites.

However things went wrong whenever there was no recognition of accountability. The critical period of landlessness in Israel came with the monarchy, especially with Solomon and his sons. Kings took the land as their property, and introduced absolute royal power over it.⁶⁰ The transfer of land from individuals into ownership by the monarch resulted in the exclusion of many citizens. In the story of Meribael's estate (2Sam. 18-19), David transferred the land that was once considered a paternal inheritance into royal ownership, reinforcing the privilege of the monarch to confiscate land and use it as a reward or punishment for the subjects.⁶¹ Brueggemann calls this concept of land both 'royal' and 'urban' because it rested on

⁵⁷ Wright, C.J.H., *op. cit.*, pp.51-56

⁵⁸ Brueggemann, W., *op. cit.*, pp.5/6

⁵⁹ Wright, C.J.H., *op. cit.*, p.57-59

⁶⁰ Brueggemann, W., *op. cit.*, p.10; See also Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966, p.170

⁶¹ Fager, J. A., *Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee. Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the sociology of Knowledge*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, p.87

the power of the monarchy and benefited the urban class⁶². In this context the possession of land strengthened the power of the ruling class, while the landless had no rights, and the king had the power to grant or withdraw possession in accordance with an individual's loyalty. Both God and the people were disappointed by the king's behaviour, though the prophet Samuel had warned the Israelites about this when they asked for a king. (1Sam.8). Land that had once been seen as a proof of God's presence and a source of joy became a sign of misery and oppression.

The very land that promised to create space for human joy and freedom became the very source of dehumanizing exploitation and oppression. Land was indeed a problem in Israel. Time after time, Israel saw the land of promise become the land of problem. The very land that contained the sources of life drove kings to become agents of death. Society became the frantic effort of the landed to hold onto the turf, no matter what the cost. Israel finally waited for Jeremiah to bring to full expression the grief and weariness as this great landed people faced the reality that land given can become land lost.⁶³

The situation is depicted by Nehemiah. He described how living in land controlled by another was to live an insecure existence: 'Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that thou gavest to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. And its rich yield goes to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress' (Neh.9:36-37). The land reforms undertaken by Nehemiah and Ezra brought landholders to resolve to live lives in contrast to their royal fathers whose sinful ways they confessed (Neh.9, Ezra 9). Israel's experience with land was characterised by successive reforms. Their experience started with land promises to be fulfilled, through the destructive power of kingship to exile and the weariness of moral management and eventually of the restoration in the land.⁶⁴ It was a cyclical process from landlessness to land-ownership, from land to landlessness, from landlessness to land, from life to death, from death to life.⁶⁵ It was a faith experience which consisted of journeying into and out of land. This process was kept alive by the belief that God is the ultimate owner of the land and that land should serve every member of the community.

⁶² Brueggemann, W. 'Reflections on Biblical Understandings of Property', *International Review of Mission* 64, 1974, p.354

⁶³ Brueggemann, W., *op.cit.*, 1977, p.11

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.13/14

⁶⁵ Schaeder, G., *The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973, p.29

The Rwandan experience with land-ownership and its use was characterised by a different ideology. Parsons suggests two approaches to the study of ideology, the “interest theory” and the “strain theory”:

For the first ideology is a mask and a weapon; for the second, a symptom and a remedy. In the interest theory, ideological pronouncements are seen against the background of a universal struggle for advantage; in the strain theory, against the chronic effort to correct socio-psychological disequilibrium. In the one, men pursue power; in the other, they flee anxiety.⁶⁶

The interest theory is probably the one that explains the mechanisms and foundations within the Rwandan *ubuhake* system also which was a “form of instrumental friendship between two persons of relatively unequal socio-economic status.”⁶⁷ This relationship involved the exchange of protection and/or benefits from the person of higher status (the patron) for general loyalty and service from the lower-status person (the client). It consisted of a contract⁶⁸ between a lord or patron or *shebuja* (in most times a Tutsi) and a client called *umugaragu*.⁶⁹

The ruling class that put this ideology into place persuaded Rwandan people that the king owned everything and that he could give to or take from whom he wished, and that he was the patron of everybody although below him existed many other patrons and many clients down to the lowest rank of society. It is the power of both professional expertise and personal ability, to persuade the population to do what is right in the eyes of those who benefit from the system that can be called ideology. The *Ubuake* was thus the result of a well thought out and implemented ideology, rooted in myths. Medard, writing on Africa in general, suggests that “ideological legitimacy is expressed through myths (...)the fact that no one believes these accounts does not mean that they are inefficient: they monopolize and homogenize the allowable public discourse and act as a ritual of submission for those who are submitted to it... The efficiency of the system ... rests on the articulation of this

⁶⁶ Geertz, C., *The Interpretation of Cultures*, London: Fontana 1993, p. 201

⁶⁷ Newbury, C., ‘Rwanda: recent debates over governance and rural development’, in G. Hyden & M. Bratton, (eds), *Governance and Politics in Africa*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992, p. 73

⁶⁸ The text of the contract formalised in 1942, is given in appendix 2 of this work.

⁶⁹ Codere recognises that there were variations in types of *ubuhake* system. She distinguished between *ubuhake* linking Tutsi patrons and Hutu clients (which she characterised as generally exploitative) and patron-client ties in which both partners were Tutsi (which she characterised as types of alliances.)

ideological legitimization and political control”.⁷⁰

Land and cattle, the most valuable possessions in the Rwandan tradition, were owned by the king. There has never been an understanding of land that ties it with its ownership by a divinity other than the king. Land and cattle changed hands as the king wished within the framework of the *ubuhake* system.

There were two forms of *ubuhake*: The *ubuhake* of cow in which the *shebuja* gave the *umugaragu* a cow that he could keep as long as he was able to please the *shebuja*. The *umugaragu* had to give in return agricultural products and services. There was also the *ubuhake* of land that consisted of the transfer of land. The practice of land clientship started in the 19th century when large tracts of land were taken over by the king and given to his chiefs for pastoral purposes. Initially these lands had been grazing domains for the king himself. Gradually the practice was extended to the chiefs who, being the king's clients, were holding cattle that actually belonged to the king. Then all the favourites of the king and the chiefs benefited from these special rights of holding the lands.⁷¹

Those who took over the land portioned it out and rented it to people of lower status with a contract for their services and the amount of agricultural produce to be given to the lord at the time of the harvest. In practice the land went into the hands of those who already had large herds of cattle. The plight of Rwandans of lower status worsened.

Those possessing large numbers of livestock set about getting grazing rights. These rights (*ibikingi*) were hereditary and included the right to sub-let and hire. The result of this appropriation of the public domain by the Tutsis was that from the beginning of this period, the new households, looking for new land to establish themselves on, had to ask to sub-let it from the privileged owners. The land which they were granted (*isambu*) turned them into dependent clients.-.⁷²

⁷⁰ Medard, J.F., 'Authoritarismes et democracies en Afrique Noire' in *Politique Africaine* 43 (Oct.) 1994: 92-104

⁷¹ Nkulikiyimfura, J.N., *op.cit.* p.274. The practice was legalised under King Kigeli IV Rwabugiri (1860-1895)

⁷² Paternostre, de la M., *op.cit.*, p. 57

The client was allowed two years in which to cultivate the land and send occasional gifts of crops. He had to provide the land-owner with two days' labour in the sowing season.⁷³ For de Paternostre, clients paid far too much in comparison with what they received.

Among the charges on clients there was the obligation to construct and maintain the kraals and watering places of the pastoral estate, the obligation to provide salt for the livestock by burning papyrus, and the exorbitant duty of allowing the landowner's animals, excluding all others, to graze on the shoots in the fields of sorghum, peas, and beans after the harvest. It happened that some landowners waited so long to profit by these rights, that the shoots had grown so much that their clients lost the following harvest through not having been able to plough their fields in time.⁷⁴

The system of *ubuhake* seen from the agriculturists' perspective, was simply a measure that increased the flow of their resources back to the landlords, from those who needed it most towards those who needed it least. "As for the privileged landowners, on the other hand, they found an endless enrichment. (...) This new system of tenancy, added to the system of renting livestock, assured the privileged of huge wealth and allowed them to live in total idleness"⁷⁵

Contrary to Tardits' view that clientship is "a relationship of dependence not based on kinship and formally entered into by an act of deliberate choice",⁷⁶ Rwandans accepted the system as a result of the military and ideological campaign⁷⁷ the trend being that weaker parties were not given free choice.

Since the Christian missionaries had decided to exert their influence through the existing ruling class, they did not challenge this ideology. They had already endorsed the myth and ideology of a superior race. Even when the consequences of the *ubuhake* began to be felt by the majority of Rwandans, Christian missionaries remained silent and the Rwandan Christian community was not immune to the

⁷³ Linden, I., *op.cit.*, 1977, p. 11.

⁷⁴ Paternostre, de la M., *op. cit.*, p. 57

⁷⁵ Paternostre, de la M., *op.cit.*, p.57

⁷⁶ Mair, L. in Tardits C., *Le royaume Bomum*, p.889

⁷⁷ Nkulikiyimfura, J.N., *op.cit.*, p.273. The chiefs who submitted, the cow keepers gradually learnt to accept the power of the *Mwami* over their cows. This heavy hand on the cattle seems to have become accepted in the reign of Cyilima II Rujugira (1731-1760)." In this sense, the *ubuhake* was imposed by the patron on the client who did not have any choice whether to accept it or to refuse it: "You don't always choose your pastoral patron: but he is necessary to you"

consequences of *ubuhake* practice. When Linden presents the Rwandan Roman Catholic Church as having been initially a Hutu Church, and then a Tutsi Church,⁷⁸ one can only see in this a Church in which leaders were shifting sides from being with the poor, the clients, towards being with the lords, the rich cattle owners.

Even when the victims of the *ubuhake* system increased, towards the end 1930s, following problems and abuses, the colonial administration formalised the system and put it in writing in the form of a 'contract of *Ubugaragu*'. To facilitate its regulations, the text explained and detailed all the values and norms in which the institution of *ubuhake* was to be carried out. It took its definitive form after 1940, was published on 1/8/1941 and made compulsory by the Resident in January 1942.⁷⁹ However the direction of change in the *ubuhake* system tended toward less reciprocity and more exploitation. These developments were related especially to the growth of state power (expressed particularly through political centralisation and growing government penetration at the local level) which placed increased prerogatives in the hands of Tutsi authorities, who changed the social relations of production and used these powers to enhance their control over key resources: land, cattle, and people. In Newbury's view, the system underwent transformations throughout the kingdom of Rwanda, in that the state authorities together with the colonial administration served as an active agent creating and maintaining patterns of ethnic and class inequality⁸⁰. The system kept the clients in the fear of being deprived of their lands if they did not comply with the payment of what was required from them.

In the early 1950s the social exclusion caused by the *ubuhake* system was so real that the colonial administration became alarmed. Cattle and food producers fought over too little land, while the majority of the population could not get access to land-ownership at all.⁸¹ As Linden noted, "a leisured class of some 2,000 chiefs and about 50,000 Tutsis who never tilled the soil" had monopolised all the resources of the country⁸²

⁷⁸ Linden, I., *Church and Revolution*, Manchester Press, 1977, p. 65

⁷⁹ Nkulikiyimfura J.N., *Le gros bétail et la société rwandaise. Evolution historique: des xii^e-xiv^e siècles à 1958*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994, p. 178

⁸⁰ Newbury, C., *op. cit.* 1988, p. 74

⁸¹ Belgian Government Information Center, (1952) *A Ten Year Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Belgian Trust Territory of Rwanda-Urundi*. P. 42

⁸² Linden, I., 1977, *op. cit.* p.73

In an attempt to alleviate injustices and the exclusion that the majority of Rwandans suffered, in 1951 the colonial administration stated its intention to abolish the *ubuhake* system; and one year later, King Rudahigwa issued a circular explaining why and how he planned to put an end to it. In 1954 he and the national *Conseil Supérieur* issued a decree providing for the progressive dissolution of *ubuhake* ties and the distribution of cows and land to former clients. These reforms were interrupted by the 1959 popular revolution when Hutus slaughtered cows thinking that they were eliminating the symbol of old oppression or of satisfying their nutritional needs.⁸³

Although the system was eventually abolished, its legacy lived on for a long period that followed with far-reaching implications particularly in relation to land-ownership. In fact as DeLame rightly observes, land and cattle were part of the important factors that motivated people to kill their own neighbours during the 1959 social revolution.⁸⁴ When many Tutsis went into exile, their properties were taken over by those (Hutus in most cases) who remained behind. The refugees of 1959 who were driven out of their land were the ones who, thirty years later, launched the 1990 war from Uganda, in an attempt to get back into their lands.

Christian missionaries did not trouble themselves about the *ubuhake* system that permeated the social fabric of Rwandan society. In fact one view suggests that without the support of the Christian missionaries, the *ubuhake* would not have been as harsh and harmful as it was.⁸⁵ Taylor noted that following the defeat of the northern rebellion led by Muhumusa and Ndungutse in 1912, not only did Tutsis loyal to Musinga enter the region for revenge, but stayed behind to consolidate their gains and to develop *ubuhake* ties with the Hutu population. He also observed that “with the aid of German military might and the tacit support of Catholic missionaries, central Rwandan Tutsi accomplished in a few years what it had taken them several centuries to achieve in southern and central Rwanda”.⁸⁶

On the whole Roman Catholic missionaries did not want to challenge the *ubuhake* structures. It required dramatic situations such as the 1928-29 and 1943 famines for

⁸³ Braeckman, C., *Rwanda, Histoire d'un génocide*, Paris: Fayard, 1994, p. 45

⁸⁴ DeLame, D., *Une colline entre mille ou le calme avant la tempête. Transformations et blocages du Rwanda rural*, Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, Annales Sciences Humaines, vol.154, 1996, p.297

⁸⁵ Linden, L., *op. cit.*, 1977, p. 109.

⁸⁶ Taylor, C., *op. cit.*, 1992, p. 57

them to take action. These two famines are said to have been caused by the hardship of the *ubuhake* system. The White Fathers were appalled by the conduct of some chiefs during the particularly severe famine in 1928/29 when 35,000 died and 70,000 emigrated to Uganda. During this period chiefs hoarded grain and seed, and continued, as was their habit, to allow cattle to trample over the farmers' crops. The cattle owners consistently opposed the extension of arable land for fear it would reduce pasture land⁸⁷. The missionaries by then felt it was time to deal with what they described as gross injustices. They deplored the failure of chiefs to recognise that the farmers had more than usufruct rights over their land and cattle. Prompted by this argument, suggestions circulated from Bishop Classe to the colonial authorities highlighting the abuse carried out on Rwandans of lower rank. "A second abuse... is that the natives of lower rank (bahutu and batwa) do not even have rights over goods produced by their labour... only incomplete rights (usufruct, use possession for life, etc)...".⁸⁸ Bishop Classe had launched, unwittingly, the foundation of social reform, as he was repeating the major theme of Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* on private ownership: "Private ownership... is the natural right of man; and to exercise that right, especially as members of society, is not only lawful but absolutely necessary".⁸⁹

Occasionally the Roman Catholic Fathers, possibly in an attempt to express *koinonia*, went further than the campaign of speaking for the voiceless. Sometimes their action put their lives in danger. One incident brought King Musinga and Schumacher, a Roman Catholic missionary, into conflict with a local chief. In 1906 Musinga's chief, Ruhigirakulinda, had punished one of his subjects for not participating in a military expedition by taking his four cows away from him. Five years later the same person was subjected to another punishment in which the chief took three more of his cows. Violating German policy, Schumacher stepped in and requested the chief to return not only the cattle recently taken for punishment, but also those that had been confiscated five years earlier. Schumacher's action was strongly criticised by both the Resident and the king. Since between 1906 and 1911 the man had started to attend the Church where he got the opportunity to bring the matter to Father

⁸⁷ Linden, I., *op. cit.*, 1977, p.168

⁸⁸ Postiaux to Residents Territoriaux, 13 September 1929

⁸⁹ The Encyclical was published on 15 May 1891, a tardy response to Marxism, with its denial of class conflict, in defence of family against the State and upholding private property. The same themes were taken up again in Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno*, published in 1931. See also Linden, *op.cit.*, p.169 on how Bishop Classe's policy influenced the Rwandan society.

Schumacher, the Resident interpreted the Father's action as proselytising.⁹⁰ Schumacher's action identifies as a prophetic voice, trying to live what *koinonia* should be all about.

Musinga on his side vented his anger in a complaint addressed to the German administration: "What have things come to, if missionaries all over the country can intimidate and threaten to banish the chiefs who punish someone who is disobedient?". The response from the Resident to Musinga reflected the same anger and fear that missionaries were increasingly establishing themselves as judges in social and economic disputes: "That is foolishness. You know as well as I that a missionary cannot banish one of your chiefs. And if one demands it of you, all you need to do is refuse (...) in my opinion this is nothing other than an attempt at power made by an ambitious man who seeks to rule, who is too vain to say to the natives who turn to him that his power is not so great"⁹¹. The king's answer reflects the danger of preaching unity and *koinonia* in a society that is divided and socially stratified.

Another well-known example is that of Father Loupias who was murdered in 1910 when he tried to intervene in a cattle dispute involving a local chief. The missionary tried in vain to persuade chief Lukara to return the cattle taken by force from one of his subjects. When Lukara decided to escape the Father attempted to stop him and Lukara's followers killed Loupias with their spears. Lukara had been on the run for two years when he was apprehended and executed in 1912. The missionary had been avenged by the German administration but at a terrible cost: 65 men killed (not including the soldiers working for the German administration), 60 women and children captured, 230 head of cattle confiscated.⁹² Again such an incident highlights how difficult it was for the *koinonia* to have an impact on the Rwandan community. However, it was such efforts and sacrifices that were necessary to keep the dangers of the exclusive practices of the system in focus.

⁹⁰ The Resident, Kandt, observed that the man went to Church because of his dispute with the chief, in the hope that the missionaries would intervene on his behalf. Schumacher argued that the man was punished because he wanted to become a Christian. On this problematic situation, Kandt wrote, "If, as often, a Christian wins a legal proceeding, good - because he has won by the strength of his rights. But if he loses, then the reason immediately invoked is that it is because he is a Christian" Kandt to Government, 3 January 1911, RU, III I/D/33

⁹¹ Kandt to Government, 3 January 1911, RU, III I/D/33. See also Schumacher to Kandt, 1 January 1911; Kandt to the Kabgayi mission, undated; memorandum of 11 February 1911; and Kandt to Schumacher, 17 January 1911; RU, III I/D/33. Schumacher was censured by the German East Africa government.

⁹² Newbury, C., *op. cit.* p. 78

Christian missionary intervention was also observed in the way they treated the *ubuhake* system. Most of the time they dealt with *ubuhake* disputes that involved the king and local chiefs. In April 1920 it was reported that the *Ubukunzi* chiefdom had ferociously resisted integration into the central government, which meant that they did not recognise the king's supremacy. When the resisting chief threatened to exterminate families who chose to be loyal to the central authority, the Roman Catholic missionaries at Mibirizi Mission called upon the territorial administrator to intervene. He decided to use the same missionaries as intermediaries in resolving the conflict between the central government and the *Ubukunzi* chiefdom. With the approval of the missionaries, the Territorial Administrator ordered Bigirumwera the Chief of *Ubukunzi* "to demonstrate submission by producing 5 cows as payment for taxes, 25 cows as a penalty, and 30 men every day to cut wood in the forest".⁹³

Missionaries also intervened in *ubuhake* disputes and injustices that involved local chiefs and ordinary Rwandans among whom were a number of Christians. On one occasion a Free Methodist missionary punished a local chief for having repeatedly mistreated one of the members of his congregation. He took him in his car and when eight miles away, he put him out and left him there.⁹⁴ Whether such a drastic action can be approved from a missionary is arguable. But the circumstances and realities of injustices that prevailed in the Rwandan society needed to be challenged by both preaching and action.

However, as Bohannan and Curtin noted, missionary intervention was hampered by their misunderstanding of the practice of *ubuhake* system, which had led to problems between early missionaries and their first converts. When priests acquired cattle, they often assigned them to the care of Hutu Christians, who sometimes understood such action to signify the cattle relationship of *ubuhake* in its traditional form. But for the European priests, these arrangements were in the context of European commodity exchange⁹⁵. This is how to many Hutu, conversion to Christianity held out the possibility of a materially better life: a better master that offered an alternative to clientship under Tutsi patrons. Under such circumstances one wonders how many

⁹³ Newbury, C., *op. cit.*, 1988, p.65

⁹⁴ Munyagisaka, P., *Amateka y'Itorero Methodiste Libre mu Rwanda. 1942-1992*, Kigali. Imprimerie URWEGO, 1993, p.42

⁹⁵ Bohannan, P., 'The impact of money on an African subsistence economy', in *Journal of Economic History*, XXIII, 4, 1959, 491-503.

Rwandan Christians truly converted to Christianity given the prevailing context dominated by alliances, interests and profits.

At this point one can argue that the Rwandan churches, the Roman Catholic Church in particular, was part of the problem. First by being silent over a long period when its voice was needed to challenge the institutionalised exploitation embedded in the *ubuhake* system, and secondly by the lack of a theology of land and property ownership which would have ensured that the relinquishing of King's rights of absolute ownership into private ownership went with accountability to one another and to God.

In the Mosaic Law for instance, the Israelites Jews were forbidden to steal or even covet the goods of others. "You shall not covet your neighbour's house, you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbours" Exodus 20:17. And "You must not move your neighbour's boundary marker, set up by former generations, on the property that will be allotted to you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess." (Deut.19:14). These passages as well as the jubilee law reflect a distinctive attitude towards ancestral land.⁹⁶ Acts 4:34 assumes that individual Christians in the early Church actually possessed land as their own. It is said that those who were owners of land or houses sold them and brought the price to the Apostles.

The Rwandan experience highlights also the temptation to both extremes: the *ubuhake* system on the one hand in which the king and chiefs monopolised the resources and on the other the private ownership without accountability, and a need to reiterate the argument of Pope Leo XIII (*Rerum Novarum*, 1891) that "in no other way can a father reasonably provide food for his family than by having lucrative property which he can hand on to his children (...)"⁹⁷. It is also necessary to emphasise the Hebrew tradition by which, under God's ownership of land⁹⁸, no one

⁹⁶ Barton, J., *Ethics and the Old Testament*, London: SCM Press, 1997, p.57

⁹⁷ Davies, H.S.J.*op.cit.*p.266

⁹⁸ According to the Hebrew tradition, God is the ultimate owner of the earth and human beings who inhabit it. Ps. 24:1 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it'. So to claim exclusive ownership of cattle and land is to deny God his right and position within His creation. The Israelites understood this theological principle and integrated it into their laws and moral code. They considered God to be the only and ultimate owner of the lands of their country. Their claims on land originated from God and His will, since it was to God that this land belonged, and He alone could dispose of it.

was allowed accumulation to such an extent that others would be left without a plot of land to live on.⁹⁹

The implications for individuals holding this land as trustees accountable to God assume that they are not allowed to do whatever they want with the land. The use of the property has to take into account the needs of the community and not just the needs of one individual. As owners, the landowner and cattle breeder have obligations towards the community. For Leenhardt the concept of ownership has to be understood in the sense of trusteeship which goes with obligations, responsibilities and services.

The proprietor is the one who has the settled responsibility for property which he administers, from which he derives his own living and eventually that of others. Accepting the title deed of a property is thus to undertake a duty, that of making the property serve the purposes which were assigned to it. The right to property therefore is also essentially a service. The right to property therefore involves a critical limitation in that it implies both responsibility and service¹⁰⁰

This attitude, as exemplified by Jesus's social teaching, takes all human beings to belong to God who has heaven and earth in His hands; for whom the purpose of all human beings is to serve God, to love and care for the neighbour. Human beings are only stewards in this operation; the ultimate ownership is reserved to God. (v. Ex.9:29; 19.5; Jer. 27.5).

Every human property is a loan. Every owner is accountable before God for what is being administered. The product does not belong to him, but to the community.¹⁰¹

According to the Catholic teaching this dual (individual and social) ownership always has to be carefully appreciated and maintained:

Let it be clear beyond all doubt that neither Leo XIII, nor those theologians who have taught under the guidance and direction of the Church, have ever denied or called in question the twofold aspect of ownership, which is individual or social according to whether it regards individuals or concerns the common good. Their unanimous contention has always been that the right to own private property has been given to

⁹⁹ Leenhardt, H.J., *Christianisme et Vie Politique*, Geneve: Imprimerie S. Roulet & Fils, 1972, p.62/3

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.58. tr. P. Nz.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.59. tr. P. Nz.

man by nature, or rather by the Creator Himself, not only in order that individuals may be able to provide for their own needs and those of their families, but also that by means of it, the goods which the Creator has destined for the human race may truly serve this purpose. Now these ends cannot be secured unless some definite and stable order is maintained. There is therefore a double danger to be avoided. On the one hand, if the social and public aspect of ownership be denied or minimised, the logical consequence is 'individualism', as it is called; on the other hand, the rejection or diminution of its private and individual character necessarily leads to some form of 'collectivism'.¹⁰²

Individuals are under the double obligation to respect the possessions of others, to put their own possessions to proper use and to make sure that individual interest is in line with the common good. This is hardly achievable in the predatory *ubuhake* mode of exchange which was by and large a less reciprocal, exploitative relationship. 'In such relationship', argued Mies, 'no general progress for all, no 'trickle down', no development for all is possible'¹⁰³. For Engels this antagonistic relationship is attributed to the exploitation of one class by another. He wrote:

Since the exploitation of one class by another is the basis of civilisation, its whole development moves in a continuous contradiction. Every advance in production is at the same time a retrogression in the condition of the exploited class, that is of the great majority. What is a boon for the one is necessarily a bane for the other; each new emancipation of one class always means a new oppression of another class.¹⁰⁴

Engels hoped to change the polarised relationship by extending what is for the ruling class to all classes: 'what is good for the ruling class should be good for the whole of the society with which the ruling class identifies itself'¹⁰⁵

In Davis' view, the role of the state should be to regulate and adjust individual practices to the common good. "Man's natural right of possessing and transmitting property by inheritance must remain intact and cannot be taken away by the State, 'for man precedes the State, and the domestic household is antecedent, as well in idea as in fact, to the gathering of men into a community' ... the State has by no

¹⁰² Pope Pius XI, 'Encyclical letter', quoted in Davis, S.J., *op.cit.*, p.262

¹⁰³ Mies, M., *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International division of Labour*, London: Zed Books, 1986, p76

¹⁰⁴ Engels, F., 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' in Marx/Engels *Selected Works*, vol.3, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976, p.333

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

means the right to abolish it, but only to control its use and bring it into harmony with the interests of the public good'.¹⁰⁶ He believes that the role of the state is to intervene so that private property is not used for the exclusive pleasure or profit of the holder; but in the interests of the community. It calls on the rich to share the increase of their wealth with those in need. Should the rich refuse to do so, the State has a duty to force them to share with those who cannot get the basic necessities for living and make provision for the common good.

The use of property has therefore to be maintained under constant scrutiny. Is it being used for the sake of community ties and relations, to enhance the lives of the members of the community and not just of a few individuals in it? Such questioning prevents individuals from regarding themselves as autonomous once they have the means to make their living; and from assuming that they can use their property as they wish, with the State and God interfering as little as possible or not at all. The idea of absolute property and the rights of the property-owner to do as he/she pleases with it¹⁰⁷ has become the foundation of capitalism now spread all over the world and resulting in cultural and community breakdown. "Man has become individualistic as a fact, and his tendency is to live an independent life, to build up a family as an independent entity, to acquire property for his sole use. This tendency is natural, and if thwarted, discord and unhappiness are the result".¹⁰⁸

Among the Israelites, Leeuwen¹⁰⁹ noted a shift of emphasis from the bond of blood (probably relevant during the period of the journey to the Promised Land) to the bond of land. This was the time when they became so much attached to land that a person without it would appear to be hopeless and even seen as non-existent. Not having land was the worst personal circumstance. It was also difficult to regain it once the owner had had to sell it. In agricultural and indigenous communities people maintain a special physical and spiritual attachment to land:

For indigenous tribal peoples, the land of their birth, their ancestors, their history and their heritage is part of their personal and community identity, part of themselves. It is their existence, their life. They neither 'possess' nor live on the land, but consider themselves an inseparable part of the land, enjoying the God-created beauty, the

¹⁰⁶ Davis, H. S.J., *op.cit.* p.264

¹⁰⁷ Walter, T., *Fair Shares? An Ethical guide to Tax and Social Security*, Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1985, p.14

¹⁰⁸ Davies, H.S.J., *op.cit.* p.265

¹⁰⁹ Leeuwen, C.V. *Le Développement du sens social en Israël avant l'ère Chrétienne*, p.54

essential goodness of their unique part of the universe... Their sacred stories identify them with the holy places and events which occurred in the land the Creator has given them. To be deprived by violence or oppression of a people's ancestral land is to be deprived of identity, freedom, self-determination and the fullness of life. Yet this is the broken status of millions of human beings – of indigenous tribal peoples around the world and of other peoples dispossessed of their lands.¹¹⁰

According to Ucko¹¹¹, the sacredness of land should be ascertained if people want to develop a meaningful relationship with one another and with God. For him “the history of practical godlessness began with this subtle destruction of the sacred character of land.” In Ucko's sense, something of the importance of land was lost in Rwanda when the sacred rituals ceased being performed for the land.

Beside the theological argument about God's ownership of land, there is the moral argument about evils and benefits of the *ubuhake* system. Different views have been expressed for and against the practice of it. The first defends it on the grounds that it served an integrative role.¹¹² Ntaganzwa thinks the system was tolerated for the reciprocity it represented as a two-way movement of goods and services between two parties. He asserts that even if the system was exploitative, the Hutus had accepted it.¹¹³ This view too maintains that *ubuhake* had an integrationist function, linking persons of different social status, and serving to mitigate the harshness of Tutsi rule, providing protection and helping to the less powerful in a highly stratified society.¹¹⁴

One of the questions that arise from Ntaganzwa's argument is whether exploitation should be called exploitation when the dominated person has consented to it. It is as if he is arguing that theft is not wrong if the one robbed does not realise that some of his possessions have been stolen.

To address Ntaganzwa's argument, one has to understand first what is meant by exploitation. In a Marxist sense exploitation is defined as the extraction of surplus

¹¹⁰ *The San Antonio Report*, p. 49 quoted in Kenith A. D., *Sacrament And Struggle*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994 p.65

¹¹¹ Ucko, Hans, *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility? Jewish and Christian Insights*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998, p.108

¹¹² Ntaganzwa, R., *op.cit.* pp.57/8

¹¹³ *ibid.*, pp.62/3

¹¹⁴ The Integrationist view has been thoroughly presented in Maquet, *Le systeme des Relations Sociales dans le Ruanda ancien*, Tervuren: Musee royal du Congo, (Annales, Sciences de l'Homme, Ethnologie, 1), 1954.

labour and implies the existence of class antagonism.¹¹⁵ In other non-Marxist publications on the subject, the term exploitation is simply associated with a relationship in which most profits come to one side, a situation of stark inequality between rulers and ruled, the rich and the poor.¹¹⁶ Therefore exploitation is exploitation whether or not the dominated has consented to it. Furthermore, as Botte noted, the term reciprocity does not always imply a positive relationship because it says nothing about the character of the exchanges, whether they are generalised or balanced, symmetrical or asymmetrical. It refers only to the flow itself.¹¹⁷ In the case of Burundi and Rwanda, Botte noted that exploitation was rather mild because of favours in the form of protection carried out by the patron¹¹⁸. For Godelier, even in formerly classless societies where relations of domination and exploitation were accepted as exchange of services, they sometimes took the form of unequal exchanges that look more advantageous to the dominant than to the dominated; a case of alienation.¹¹⁹

De Heusch in his study of Rwanda and the Great Lakes region attempted to clarify the distinction between reciprocity that builds and promotes community ties, and exploitation that destroys the community, by opposing 'reciprocity' to 'subordination'. For him the structure of clientship was a system of domination which gave itself the appearance of reciprocity in order to construct an authoritarian type of society; a kind of 'perverted' or 'inauthentic' reciprocity. Although the language it used was a language of reciprocity, the reality was one of subordination: "under the pretext of reciprocity, the peasants were alienated."¹²⁰

Claessen and Skalnik in their study of the early State came close to such a conclusion. For them, even when reciprocity was seen as a basic principle in the early State, it involved moderate exploitation. They argue that although the flow of goods and labour was reciprocated, such reciprocity served as an ideology and a cover for exploitation.¹²¹ Trouwborst echoed this argument and noted that for

¹¹⁵ Trouwborst, A., 'From Tribute to Taxation in the Dynamics of the early state' in 'Early State Dynamics' edited by H.J.M. Claessen & P. Van de Velde in *Studies Human Society* vol.2, Leiden, New York: Kobenhavn Koln, 1987, p. 129

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.131

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.129

¹¹⁸ Botte, R., 'Processus de formation d'une classe sociale dans une société précapitaliste' in *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines* 14, 1974, p.267

¹¹⁹ Godelier, M., 'Infrastructures, sociétés, and history' in *Current Anthropology*, 1978, 19:763-771.

¹²⁰ De Heusch; *Le Rwanda et la civilisation interlacustre*, Etudes d'anthropologie historique et structural. Bruxelles: Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut de sociologie, 1966, pp.371, 441, 453

¹²¹ Claessen and Skalnik, (eds.), *The Early state*, The Hague: Mouton, 1978, p.638.

relations between rulers and ruled and also between rulers amongst themselves, the concept of reciprocal exchange does not exclude inequalities, one-sided profits and animosity.¹²²

The Rwandan *ubuhake* practice was a coercive institution by which the powerful could control subordinates and demand services.¹²³ This kind of reciprocal exchange was a factor destructive of the Rwandan community because it encouraged a large flow of resources towards the ruling class. Based on empirical research in south-western Rwanda, Newbury exposed the disadvantages of the clientship systems. She argued that clientship did not necessarily promote social integration. On the contrary, in the cases she investigated, it had promoted social division in which social classes and ethnic groups came into conflict with each other. It inhibited the development of horizontal solidarity among lower-class groups and provided vertical linkages between politically powerful individuals and less powerful clients.¹²⁴ She noted that the system resulted in a form of exploitation whereby the growth of state power in Rwanda translated into increasing control by the ruling class over resources that could permit individuals and groups to improve their material condition (or prevent their material condition from deteriorating). This control augmented the misery of the ordinary people.¹²⁵ For Linden the cow became an image of power, domination and exploitation. As a result Rwandan society was divided between an oppressed peasantry and a cattle-owning ruling class. As Linden noted, "the mystique of the ruling class was their elevation of the pastoral way of life from a particular socio-economic niche to a source of values, almost aesthetics. The cow hung like a great icon over Rwandan society, for it no praise was too great and for it a man would alienate both self and family."¹²⁶ Taylors also made the same observation when he said that young men freely risked death in battle to obtain cattle.¹²⁷ In some areas of

¹²² Trouwborst, 1987, *op. cit.*, p. 767. See also Godelier, M., in *L'Enigme du don*, Paris: Fayard, 1997, p.48

¹²³ The coercive view was stated by Helen Codere, 'Power in Rwanda', in *Anthropologica* N.S., IV.1, 1962, : 45-85

¹²⁴ For Newbury these are historical transformations that had as victims of the systems those who were exploited and wanted to change the situation and as guardians of the system those who benefited from it and resisted changes because they were taking advantage of it.

¹²⁵ Newbury shares this view with Richard Joseph in his study of ethnicity in Nigeria. See Richard A. Joseph, 'Ethnicity and Prebendal politics in Nigeria: A Theoretical Outline' (Paper presented at the annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Denver, Colorado, September 1982) and Joseph, 'Class, State, and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria', in *Journal of Commonwealth and comparative Politics* 21.3 (183):21-23

¹²⁶ Linden, I., *op. cit.* 1977, p. 17

¹²⁷ Taylor, *op.cit.*, 1992, p.30

Rwanda, it was going to take a long time to free Rwandans from the *ubuhake* mentality. Linden observed that

In several regions the dissolution of *ubuhake* remained a dead letter; Tutsi ideology thoroughly dominated the Hutu of central Rwanda and had been internalised, with the resulting psychological dependence and sense of inferiority that limited the potential for creative political action, even among the Hutu counter-elite.¹²⁸

The fourth view asserts that both parties involved in the transactions benefited from the system. According to Baudouin Paternostre de la Mairie¹²⁹, the “*ubuhake*” system benefited both the Tutsi lords and the Hutu clients. For the Hutu families, the livestock acquired through the tenancy system was an invaluable source of domestic income. First it gave a surplus of milk products which meant a healthy, balanced and varied diet. Secondly it offered a kind of safety cover in times of bad harvests. Thirdly by natural productivity, the livestock gave more revenue and also gave social prestige when the patron’s power base was strengthened. For the patron, the concession of the livestock meant a life rental whereby from generation to generation they could count on a regular income in terms of agricultural products, forge tools and honey along with various other services and commitments.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, the old Hebrew tribal view of their relationship with God and the behaviour of the Nyiginya ruling class as a superior race are challenged with the principle of *Koinonia* for which God’s inclusive love is expressed. They both show that it is human nature to create the impression that only some are in God’s favour and the others outside it. By dress, colour, nationality, wealth, gender, sexual preference, education, language, looks and health, others are meant to recognize instantly whether we are blessed or cursed, beloved or rejected. For them these accidents of genetics and class determined the foundations of unequal privilege.

The fact that the exclusive attitude of the Hebrews towards other nations gradually gave place to a new and inclusive definition of the Kingdom of God, not limited to Israel alone, but including the whole world; which was reiterated and emphasised in the New Testament, could have helped Rwandan Christians to establish the

¹²⁸ Linden, *op.cit.*, 1977 p.234

¹²⁹ Paternostre de la M., *op.cit.*, 1972, p.56

foundations of a community of God's people, and not a community of divided and exclusive Hutus, Tutsis and Twa Christians. Such a task could have helped to establish a genuine Christian identity powerful enough to challenge dangerous and exclusive ethnic identities. Then the social and economic life of Rwandan Christians would have been built on the principle of *koinonia*, uniting in one fellowship, the household of God comprising Hutu Christians, Tutsi Christians and Twa Christians and allowing them to share their day-to-day life experience. In this new fellowship, the negative interpretation of ethnic identities would have eventually disappeared.

While the Hebrew self-understanding as God's people and not owning anything but living as trustees of what belonged to God, regulated their socio-economic relations and made them accountable to God, the Rwandan myths and ideologies mythified ethnic and social inequalities and led to exclusion and inequalities among Rwandans. This was a constant threat to the spirit of community among Rwandans and among Rwandan Christians in particular. Unlike the Hebrew experience which at least helped to regulate life within the Jewish community and served as a framework of reference whenever the prophets stood up to fight social evils among God's people, the Rwandan Christian experience shows that the myths of god-given inequalities influenced the Rwandan conflicts. This chapter argued that the Rwandan Christian community remained prisoners of myths and ideologies of inequality and domination which should have been challenged and re-examined in light of the Christian message.

The radical vision of God's all-inclusive care, and Jesus' declaration of God's all-inclusive care thus have far-reaching implications for human behaviour: nobody is to be left out of the community: not a community of selected friends only but also of former enemies: the command is 'love your enemies'. The Hebrew prophets' vision of the Kingdom of God as a household where every human being has a place, although never popular among those in power, and Jesus' reiteration of this truth constitute the basis of a true Christian community. The divine household is inclusive and supersedes family, ethnic or tribal differences. Nevertheless, this does not deny the natural family identity but rather gives it a new meaning. It transforms the natural inwardness of family, tribal or ethnic identities into an all-encompassing community identity.

The theology of inclusiveness in which *koinonia* is rooted reminds the Rwandan Christian community that each person is grafted into the body of Christ. Full

commitment to him and to one another, participation in one another's lives and diversity within the corporate body are the pillars of the concept of *koinonia*. Within it, one identity prevails: the godliness of the fellowship. Ethnic and gender identities as well as social class distinctions which remain exclusive enclaves and allow individuals to hug and cherish their separate lives to the detriment of others contradict the existence of *koinonia*; they bear witness that for them God is not a centre of unity sufficient to enable His people to live with others in the household.¹³⁰ Should not Rwandan Christians reassert the relevance of *koinonia* which the prophets, Jesus himself, and the early Christian community preached about? It is in this way that they can show how God embraces all individuals and all nations.

¹³⁰ Moede, G. F., *op.cit.*p.141

CHAPTER THREE

THE DIVISIVE ROLE OF MONEY IN SOCIAL RELATIONS

3.1. Introduction

Money has an important place in human socio-economic relations. It can help in creating and nurturing relationships between individuals and within a community. It is a useful tool with which to improve the life of the poor and the sick. But it can be used to tarnish relationships, to destroy communities and to weaken social relations. It is the characteristic ambivalence of money that preoccupies practical theology, because by being a good tool for community development, money may also become a divine instrument; a tool that promotes the well-being Christian communities. Yet the same money can destroy community ties among God's people. Then it makes enemies and separates people from one another, and from God. Although in most cases both aspects are intertwined and apparently inseparable the challenge for Christians is to use money for the building up of God's Kingdom on earth, in specific communities where the Gospel is preached and takes root.

Beside the undeniable fact that money contributed to the socio-economic development of Rwanda, it is important to scrutinise what it did in the area of socio-economic relations between Rwandans, and among Rwandan Christians in particular. This chapter presents an analysis of how the introduction of money facilitated the channelling of the country's economic resources from the poor to the wealthy, creating a pattern of socio-economic exclusion of the many. Money and economic policy served above all the interests of the colonial administration, of trade and of the small elite of Rwanda. It argues that the monetarisation of Rwanda divided the Christian community; as individualism grew, use of money infected some Rwandan traditional values such as solidarity and reciprocity. Some Rwandan commodities which used not to be sold or bought began to be exchanged for money, disturbing the existing patterns of social exchange. In particular, the sale and purchase of land resulted in its individualisation and desecration, undermining the ties of the Rwandan Christian community. The introduction and development of cash cropping shifted the people's focus from food production to cash crop production which sometimes resulted in endemic shortages of food, family break-down, migration and land-conflicts.

3.2. Serving two masters

Money has an important place in the debate about relationships among human beings and between them and God, and its ambivalent characteristics have preoccupied Christians' minds. Its importance to humankind is unquestionable in the modern world. Buckle observes 'it is certain that, after the love of knowledge, there is no one passion which has done so much good to mankind as the love of money'¹. Money can be used to cement and improve human relationships and the relationship between human beings and God; or it can be used to destroy them.² The way money is used can also destroy communities when it is given the power to rule peoples' lives, when it is allowed to come before human relations. Then it becomes a 'money-god' or 'Mammon'. It is 'Mammon' for people who think in terms of money, and on behalf of money; these are 'the economists of injustices' and become the servants of it.³ This kind of money makes enemies and separates people from one another, and from God. It is in this context that the Bible presents money as the rival of God. 'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth' (Matthew 6:24). Our relationship to money has considerable importance in the way we relate to each other and in the way we relate to God. It can be used to strengthen relationships within the *koinonia* or to undermine them.

When members of the *koinonia* are ready to manifest God's sovereignty over money; and to admit, as Calvin once said, that their money belongs to Another,⁴ money can implement God's will and the benefits of the *koinonia*. They withdraw their hope from Mammon and put it where it should be: in the relationship with God and with one another. In this way, money is disconnected from the search for money, from the pursuit of more, and it becomes a non-threatening means of improving human relations. Mammon, the god, is de-sanctified. 'In this way, money is brought back to its simple role as material instrument. Whenever money is not more than an object, whenever it has lost its seductive influence, its high value, its superhuman lustre, then we can use it as an ordinary tool'⁵. Therefore wealth, here symbolised by money, is good, but good only when it is a social good and when its pursuit does not

¹ Quoted in Winer, J., *Religious Thought and Economic Society: Four chapters of an unfinished work*, (ed. by Meltz, J. & Winch, D.), Durham/North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1978, pp.1987/1988

² Haan, R., *The Economics of Honour – Biblical reflections on money and property*, Geneva: WCC publications, 1988, pp.54/55

³ *ibid.*, p. 53

⁴ See Belier, *La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin*, Geneva, 1961, p.277

⁵ Ellul, J., *L'homme et l'argent*, Lausanne, 1979, p.35

weaken those impulses within a man that go out towards his fellows and God, and so render him unfit for the kingdom of heaven.”⁶

Aristotle’s distinction of two types of economy is also relevant to this analysis. He distinguished between the kind of economy that existed to supply the basic needs of households and the community at large (*oikonomiké*), and the economy that served to increase wealth in the form of amassing money for its own sake (*kapeliké*). The latter involves the effort of human nature to surmount the limitations of life and its essential needs, by infinitely amassing money to achieve infinite supplies of the necessities of life and excessive pleasure. Then buying and selling become part of this acquisition. For Aristotle money as a medium of wealth accumulation through making profits should be condemned.⁷ For centuries, Christians and moralists adopted this attitude of condemning the money-accumulation economy, using all means at their disposal to fight it and to prevent its spread. Such measures included the prohibition of charging of interest on loans, calling for fair prices that were not manipulated by a monopoly, and limiting the right to property.⁸

This tradition was shaken in the 17th century when Locke turned Aristotle’s values and the basis of Christian ethics upside down. It was Locke, more than anybody else who justified and extended individual right to property for the purposes of accumulating wealth through capitalisation; money being an instrument to help this process.⁹ Binswanger summarises Locke’s argument as follows:

The money we are speaking of here is obviously not the same as is used merely for the mutual exchange of surpluses (in the sense of *oikonomiké*), but is the money with which one can purchase land and other production factors (in the sense of *kapiliké*), thus transforming land and the other production factors into a money value (capital) which can be used to generate a sum of money (profit). This money value (of land and other production) is then the capitalised money yield. The ascension of the economy based on money leads to re-evaluation of property, by its being transformed into capital. This in turn leads to a change in the laws governing the value of things, which in the last analysis are based on the regulation of property. The

⁶ Matthews, S., *The social teachings of Jesus Christ: An Essay in Christian Sociology*, New York: MacMillan, 1987, p.148

⁷ quoted in Duchrow, U., *Alternatives to Global Capitalism: Drawn from Biblical History, Designed for Political Action*, Utrecht:International Books, 1995, pp.35/36

⁸ Duchrow, U., *op.cit.*, 1995, p.36

⁹ Locke, J., *Two Treaties of Government* (reprinted 2nd ed.), ed. Laslett, P., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 44

consequence of this is a concentration of ownership of no-multipliable resources such as land. However, if one correctly projects Locke's views onto the economic development of the industrial revolution, this also leads to the increasing appropriation of raw materials and energy, whose concentration can be increased annually, as long as supplies exist. So in addition to the concentration of property, there is a general increase in the amount of property. This means that money influences both the distribution and the growth of the national product. Here the decisive factor is that this tendency toward concentration and increase of property can continue indefinitely.¹⁰

For many social economists the revolution that brought about the money-accumulation economy was bound to affect millions of people's lives. In the words of Spradley and McCurdy, 'money is one of the shatteringly simplifying ideas of all time, and like any other new and compelling idea, it creates its own revolution.'¹¹ For Duchrow, it is the cause of human suffering and the devastation of the environment.¹² Hinkelammert called it a fetishism.¹³

Money, as the colonial administration viewed it, was expected to help to improve socio-economic relations among Rwandans and between them and foreigners;¹⁴ to alleviate the difficulties and shortcomings involved in bartering and *ubuhake* as systems for exchanging goods and services. In a barter economy, it was argued, trading is costly because there must be a double coincidence of wants. So using a medium of exchange reduces the costs of matching buyers and sellers and allows society to devote scarce resources to other things¹⁵.

This economic argument is contradicted by observation of what actually happened in Rwanda where money contributed to the worsening of socio-economic relations. The Rwandan experience showed that although the introduction of a medium of exchange facilitated economic transactions and indeed allowed economic progress in general, it also had social and behavioural implications that affected relationships among the Rwandan Christian community and between them and God. De Lame observed that the introduction of money principally served the interests of the colonial

¹⁰ Quoted in Duchrow, U., *op.cit.*, 1995, p. 28

¹¹ Spradley, J.P. & McCurdy D.W. (ed.). (2nd ed.) *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural anthropology*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971 pp.294/95

¹² Duchrow, U., *op.cit.*, 1995, p.39

¹³ Hinkelammert, F.J., *The Ideological Weapons of Death: A Theological Critique of Capitalism*, Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 1986, pp55-61

¹⁴ De Paternostre, de la M., *op.cit.*, 1972, p.76

¹⁵ Begg, D., Fischer, S. & Dornbusch, R. (4th ed.), *Economics*, London: McGraw – Hill, 1994, p. 404.

administration, missionaries and trade.¹⁶ The Rwandan Christian community presented here an interested party because in the early days Christian missionary stations served as a channel through which Rwandans became acquainted with the concept of money and wages. According to Leurquin, the monetarisation of the Rwandan community was accomplished progressively after 1918 for purposes including that of tax (colonial administration) and church offerings, collection and the promotion of private property.¹⁷ Linden made the same observation, that “although none has noted how Rwandan converts first conceptualised money, it is known that missionaries began monetarily remunerating Hutu converts who worked for them at mission stations about 1912”.¹⁸ On the establishment of a Protestant mission station, the colonial administration advised the missionaries to start to sell food and to offer wages to those employed at the mission. For most Rwandans this seems to have been the first exposure to the concept and practice of wage labour.¹⁹ The introduction of money to Rwandans ought not necessarily to have been a problem in itself; by it some Rwandans improved their well-being and their socio-economic condition. However the economic progress achieved should not have been allowed to go unchecked, especially considering social problems created in the course of that economic progress. Capitalisation of land and produce, cash cropping and the charging of interest are illustrations of how money affected the Rwandan community.

3.3. ‘Land shall not be sold in perpetuity...’

It is not surprising that this divine prohibition against selling one’s land to another in perpetual freehold is inserted in the text on the sabbatical year and on the year of Jubilee. It summarises what can be called Israel’s land theology. ‘The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants. Throughout the land you hold, you shall provide for the redemption of the land’ (Leviticus 25:23-24). In Old Testament Israel, wealth was directly linked to land and to land ownership. For a nation of arable and pastoral farmers like Israel, land was the only permanent possession. In such circumstances, to be dispossessed of one’s

¹⁶ de Lame, D., *op.cit.*, 1996, p. 163

¹⁷ Leurquin, Ph., *Le Niveau de vie des populations rurales du Ruanda-Urundi*, Louvain, Paris: Nauwelaerts pour l’Institut de Recherches économiques et sociales, 1960, p.112

¹⁸ Linden, L., *op.cit.*, 1977, p.111

¹⁹ Taylor, C. C., *op. cit.*, 1992, p.55

land or, worst of all, to be driven out of the country into exile was unmitigated calamity.²⁰

In this sense God's instruction not to sell land in perpetuity has social and economic implications. The God of Israel is concerned with the life of the person who had lost his land through the necessity to sell it. The divine law provided that the land sold could be redeemed; if not returned free in the year of Jubilee. This was to maintain the social cohesion of the community which the selling of land appeared to be destroying.

Biblical land legislation is rooted in the Hebrew tradition which viewed land as God's property entrusted to the clan and to families for the purpose of the community. They believed that they had received the land from Yahweh as a heritage and this land was therefore an inalienable possession of God and the concrete proof of the fulfilment of the ancient divine promises made to their ancestors. For them, the land of Israel was a holy land in the sense that any foreign annexation of the land represented not only a violent usurpation of ancestral rights, but was also a profanation of God's will.²¹

When with the influence of a money and profit - oriented culture, land started to be sold and bought and the social cohesion of the Israelites disintegrated, the prophets stood up and said that God was opposed to the selling of land, a process by which it was being transferred from the poor into the hands of those who had money. The contradictions within Israelite society are pictured in the Naboth-Ahab case. Naboth represents a peasant life strongly attached to land inherited from the ancestors, whilst Ahab represents commercial life in which land could be bought and sold as a commodity (1Kings 21:1-3). With money, large properties were acquired at the expense of peasants who had inherited these lands from ancestors. It is the spirit of commercial requirement that motivated Queen Jezebel, Ahab's wife, to make false accusations against Naboth which eventually led to his death (1Kings 21:10). In other cases, despite the ferocious resistance of poor peasants, the latter were either forced to leave their land or to give up their ownership of it, fearing for their life.

²⁰ Wright, C.J.H., *God's People in God's Land. Family, Land and Property in the Old Testament*, Michigan: Paternoster Press & Eerdmans, 1990, p. 3/4

²¹ Echegarey, H., *The Practice of Jesus*, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, p.24

The result was that those peasants who lost land were obliged to sell their labour to the large landowner for smaller incomes.²² They became slaves or hired labour for the rich. In addition, the landless were much more vulnerable to destitution in periods of crisis than those who farmed their own land.²³ As a consequence the increase in the number of landless labourers tended to disrupt the solidarity of the kinship units which made individuals even more vulnerable to falling into a dependent status. The Bible allows no misunderstanding about this: 'Cursed be he who removes his neighbour's landmark' (Deut. 27:17), 'Woe to those ' says Isaiah 5:8, 'who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land'.

The land issue was at the centre of the Jubilee legislation which was drawn up at time when the deportees were preparing to return home, and placed deliberately and firmly within the 'Code of Holiness', which ensured that both the deportees and those who had remained within the country but who had lost their lands, were to regain their lands.²⁴ God is presented as opposed to any process which can result in the accumulation of land in the hands of the few and the deprivation of the many. The situation of peasant farmers, with little or no land, in neighbouring countries was deplorable. For instance peasant farmers were severely hurt under the Canaanite economic system that viewed land as a commodity.²⁵

It is in this context that the Bible refers to economic exclusion as a sin. Isaiah of Jerusalem (5:8f) inveighed against those who dispossess and exclude others so that they can accumulate possessions. The Bible presents God as requiring economic justice: the restoration of land to its original owner. In the 50th year, the year of Jubilee, land was to be restored to its original owner (Leviticus 25:1-59). For the Hebrew, the selling and buying of land was like a rent since though land could only be bought it was for a limited period. According to Leviticus 25:23, God says "the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me". According to Walter, "a purchaser was buying not the land itself but only a specific number of harvests until the year of Jubilee".²⁶ The Jubilee

²² Collier, P., 'Malfunctioning of African Rural Factor Markets: Theory and a Kenya Example', in *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* 45 (May 1983), pp.141-172

²³ A. Sen, 'Starvation and Exchange Entitlements: A General Approach and its Application to the Great Bengal Famine', *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (January 1977), pp.46-49, 55

²⁴ Logan, Pat, 'The biblical jubilee: political economy and Christian realism' in *Proclaim Liberty: Reflections on theology and debt*. Christian Aid. 1998. P. 57

²⁵ Fagar, J.A., *op.cit.* p.88

²⁶ Walter, T., *op.cit.*, 1985, p.12

law serves as a reminder that land belongs to God, no one else can claim ultimate ownership of it. Thus since selling and buying land leads to individuals regarding themselves as owners of the land such transactions should be avoided. For the landless individuals the Jubilee law meant recovering their dignity and place in their community. The practice of Jubilee was the process by which those socially excluded were brought back into the community and this prevented Israel, whenever they obeyed the law, from being an exclusive society. Silver noted that at least during the eighth and seventh centuries, Israel and Judah enjoyed a vigorous economy from which few were excluded.²⁷

The king of Rwanda was recognised by his subjects as the possessor of all objects, all properties, all ground and minerals, all crops, and all animals, and he could present them as gifts, or give property as a fief or lease it. Although the king could take land from some of his subjects and give it to others, this ownership was symbolic because in most cases the land was held by a family. Before the coming of the colonial powers and Christian missionaries, selling and buying were limited to certain items only. Land could not be bought nor sold. When the Christian missionaries arrived they needed land on which to settle; to build churches, schools, hospitals and for some other activities that were needed in the community. However, they did not rush or settle on any piece of land they came across. The Roman Catholic missionaries, for instance, had strict criteria to follow in their choice of sites. They had to make sure that the area was highly populated; that the site was reasonably elevated and airy for health and security reasons; and that the soil was fertile enough to provide self-sufficiency in foodstuffs.²⁸ As for the Free Methodist Church, in one case the following criteria applied: that there were no other Protestants in the area²⁹, there was fresh water, clay for the making of bricks, spacious grounds, a dense population, the site was on the main road and offered a very good view of Lake Kivu.³⁰ Most of the missionary stations occupied in the early years satisfied similarly wide-ranging criteria; the most important of all being the fertility of the land.

²⁷ Silver, M., *Prophets and Markets: The Political Economy of Ancient Israel*, Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing, Boston, 1993, pp.1-7

²⁸ Mbonimana, G. & Ntezimana, E., *op.cit.*, p. 132.

²⁹ There was an official ruling that denominations should give themselves distance from other FMC establishments. At one time they were even given limited areas they could not cross.

³⁰ Munyagisaka, P., *Amateka y'Itorero Methodiste Libre mu Rwanda. 1942-1992.* Kigali. Imprimerie URWEGO, 1992, p. 28

The lands acquired were often so extensive that clashes occurred between the Church officers and the colonial administration, the king and his chiefs, and with the population. In 1909 for example the White Fathers acquired an estate of 700 ha at Save and another one of 750 ha at Zaza³¹. Soon after that, it became clear that these lands were too extensive and the colonial administration asked for them to be reduced. In one incident, for example, the Save Fathers were surprised to hear from Von Grawert (the German authority in Rwanda) that Roman Catholics had been refused permission to establish any more missions because the king was worried about the amount of land they already controlled.³² But even after the cutback, these properties remained extensive.

Before 1903, all Christian missionaries' activities were carried out on lands granted by the king in return for payment or *à titre onéreux* according to the custom of tenancy of that time. However that practice became disadvantageous because the missionaries did not obtain full rights of ownership; they were put into the existing system of land clientship. To remedy this problem, the Apostolic Vicar asked, and got, from the Protectorate of the Government permission to convert these holdings into private properties according to the German practice.³³ This capitalisation of land was one of the major developments in Rwandan economic history.

Land that was acquired by outright purchase became irredeemable private property. Adriaenssens noted that during the German colonial period, most of the land on which Roman Catholic missions were built was acquired through contract of purchase or *contrat d'achat-vente* concluded between the mission and the representative of the king and that the German authority ratified these contracts.³⁴ In 1903 Mgr Hirth requested that the land bought by the Church be recognised and registered as Church property. His request was answered positively by the Resident at Kigali and then by the governor of Dar-es-Salaam in 1907. Paternostre interpreted this effort by the Church leaders of this time as a decision to withdraw the land that belonged to the Church from the *ubuhake* ties and other constraints that existed within the Rwandan society.³⁵

³¹ Mbonimana G. & Ntezimana E., *op. cit.*, p. 131.

³² *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 7 December 1958

³³ De Paternostre, B., *op.cit.*, p. 98

³⁴ Adriaenssens, J., *Le droit foncier au Rwanda*, 1962, p.32

³⁵ De Paternostre, B., *op.cit.*, p.98

In land transactions which concerned missionaries, the King, who had initially dealt with land tenure according to Rwandan practice and tradition of land clientship³⁶, was then forced to sell the land. In doing so he lost all control over land conceded to the missionaries. Whether the king was tempted to acquire the newly introduced rupees (the currency introduced by German administration) or was pushed into the selling of land is not clear. The undoubted result is that he lost control of it. However during the transactions the king did manage to retain bargaining power, since although he could not refuse land to the missionaries, he was not obliged to sell them a particular place on which he did not want a settlement. To avoid trouble, missionaries had to propose three possible sites, at least fifteen kilometres apart. Although these transactions between the king and the missionaries were carefully monitored and approved by the Resident who recorded them in the form of contracts,³⁷ according to Jean Rumiya, the colonial administration supported the Church projects of acquisition of lands as a reward for a loyal collaboration.³⁸ At the end of the transactions, the king got the rupees³⁹ and the missionaries got the land. The Table below allows a quick comparison of the size and the prices of some of the lands acquired.

Table 2: Size/Price of lands acquired by early Christian missionaries

Mission station	Area in ha	Price paid to king Musinga in roupees	Dates of signature of contract
Save (1900)	220	450	29/06/1904
Zaza (1900)	164	300	10/11/1904
Nyundo (1901)	105	250	11/07/1903
Rwaza (1903)	135	300	19/06/1904
Mibirizi (1903)	130	300	24/01/1906

Source: Gudrun Honke; *Au plus profond de l'Afrique. Le Rwanda et la colonisation Allemande 1885-1915*. 1995 Peter Hammer Verlag GmVH, Wuppertal

Paternostre suggests a smaller area for the Save mission and a different kind of payment. According to him the White Fathers were given a hill of 200 ha against a

³⁶ The King 'Mwami' combined political, economic and divine powers: He was not only a political power, but also the intercessor for divine providence when it came to fertility of crops, rain, protection against drought, diseases and parasites. He owned everything: land, cattle and people (De Paternostre, B., *op.cit.*, p:33). And according to Lemarchand the king was omnipotent: "The king was incarnation of the deity (imana), the embodiment of ancestral virtues, and the source of all prosperity" (1970:33).

³⁷ Louis Roger, W. M., *op. cit.* pp151-152

³⁸ Rumiya J., *op. cit.*, p.211

³⁹ Rupees were the currency of German East Africa; one rupee was worth approximately one and one-third German marks, or 1/4d. sterling; 15 rupees equalled one pound sterling.

payment of a certain number of rolls of cloth.⁴⁰ What is undisputable is that these areas were very extensive, and the properties of the mission stations founded later were likewise of large areas. This was the case of Kabgayi in 1905, Nyaruhengeri in 1910, Kigali and Rambura in 1913. In fact, the table above does not include satellite mission stations scattered throughout the country. In a letter Bishop Hirth addressed to his superior in Algiers, he talked about the conflict between the king and the missionaries over land:

When we came to this country in 1900 it was agreed with the king that none of these villages should be taken over by the missionaries, but despite everything they have got their hands on 3,000 hectares of land on which about 8,000 people live; they exercise the authority of a king over this property, not only judging many cases but conscripting labour, ordering fatigues for construction materials, chasing out polygamists, removing amulets, demolishing the little huts for sacrifices, replacing even a chief whom they have expelled, and imposing on the chiefs catechists...⁴¹

One can only wonder what happened to these 8,000 Rwandans who happened to live on these lands. Some might have been forced to migrate while others were lucky to stay on their lands when some of lands on the hands of the Roman Catholics were reduced.

Compared to the vast areas held by the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant missions generally held small properties. They had recognised the likelihood of conflict with local chiefs and problems with local communities. According to Mbonimana and Ntezimana, Protestant missionaries in avoiding the acquisition of large properties were attempting to evade two threatening dangers: fear of conflict with local chiefs, and fear that some would join the Church with the sole intention of escaping client work. As Pasteur Johansen put it "If the Mission acquires large properties, there are real risks of entering into a kind of rivalry with the chief, and of some persons coming to settle on its domain to escape the forced labour, which would then trigger jealousy from the powerful.(...) Property - related complications and uncertainties could lead to quarrels and disputes with the chiefs; so let us to take for our missions only the lands necessary to cover the needs of the missionaries."⁴² These fears proved well founded when native dwellers who were allowed on Church lands as

⁴⁰ De Paternostre, de la M., *op. cit.*, p.77. trans. P.Nza

⁴¹ Quoted in Linden, I., *op.cit.*, p.41

⁴² Mbonima, G. & Ntezimana, E.,*op. cit.*, p.140. trans. P. Nz

tenant, with temporary cropping agreements, started to disobey their chiefs.⁴³ However even the lands held by the Protestant missions were still very large in comparison with the size of those of ordinary peasants. For instance the three Protestant Lutheran missions had 25 ha at Zinga and Rubengera, and 36 ha at Kilinda⁴⁴. The other Protestant denominations which arrived after the Bethel mission did venture into the acquisition of large properties. But this was also due to the uncomfortable situation that confronted all Protestant missionaries. Pushed by a strong Roman Catholic public opinion, the (Belgian) Ministry of Colonies adopted an attitude of distrust towards Christian denominations of Anglo-Saxon origin, who were considered undesirable because they were thought to be supporting British attempts to reoccupy Rwanda⁴⁵. These anti-British sentiments were intensified during the military occupation when British missionaries were threatened with expulsion and some actually driven out of the country. Other Protestant missionaries who were not threatened in this way were confined to limited zones.⁴⁶ The colonial administration refused to soften its attitude despite the attempts of the Church Missionary Society to regain trust and help. Pastor Anet (the British missionary working in Rwanda at that time) pleaded with the Ministry of Colonies, on the grounds that the British missionaries had supported the return of the East Rwanda territory: “ ...I would be grateful if the Royal Commissioner would use tolerance, during this transition period, towards the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society and their catechists who have already started activities in this region. Their leader, the Bishop of Kampala, has been openly sympathetic and supportive to our cause which he thought was justified. I saw him in Oxford and he reiterated to me his conviction on that matter hoping that the solution to the problem would be in the interests of Rwanda and Belgium”⁴⁷. Although in the end the Anglican missionaries were not expelled, the government refused them permission to establish new parishes on the grounds that the White Fathers had won the monopoly of evangelising Rwanda.⁴⁸ The king himself adopted an anti-Protestant attitude, expressed in a letter addressed to his chiefs:

To my chiefs: many greetings.

Through this (present) letter I announce to you that the White Fathers are my friends as they have always been. So, if they wish to build schools to teach the people of Rwanda, give them land and help them.

⁴³ Gudrun Honke, *op. cit.*, p.131.

⁴⁴ Mbonimana, G. & Ntezimana, E., *op. cit.*, p.107.

⁴⁵ After World War I, the eastern part of Rwanda called the Gisaka was taken by the British and annexed to Uganda. The Belgians were unhappy with this move and successfully negotiated its return

⁴⁶ Rumiya J., *op. cit.* P. 215

⁴⁷ A.E./II 1918 (3298), Anet au Ministre des Colonies, 5 Septembre 1923, A.A., Bruxelles. Tr. P. Nz.

⁴⁸ Rumiya J., *op. cit.*, p.216

I am happy under the rule of Belgians and for that reason I want there to be Europeans of no other nationality in my kingdom. And you will tell your sub-chiefs what I have told you. It is I, the king of Rwanda. [Yuhi Musinga],⁴⁹

This prevented Protestant missionaries from acquiring more land. Relations between Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries deteriorated so that at times, Protestant missionaries were even in danger from Roman Catholic missionaries. Linden noted that on one occasion “the Vicar Apostolic ordered the throwing up of temporary structures throughout Protestant-threatened areas, and tried to pass these off to the Belgians as chapel schools”.⁵⁰ This was a reaction to the Church Missionary Society’s apparent success in getting Tutsi converts. The CMS became more acceptable to the Belgians after Pastor Anet had done some skilful lobbying in Brussels.⁵¹

However, the size of properties held by Protestant missions did not hinder the progress of their activities. In reality they did not need such large tracts of land as their Roman catholic counterparts. For the Protestant missions’ properties, only the minister in charge of the parish was allowed to live in the parish, and a certain portion of the land was given to him to be used for his own needs (growing food for his family). The remaining land had to be devoted to social and economic activities such as infrastructures for health services and education. As far as the land to be used by the minister was concerned, it was found that some ministers did not want to leave their own homes, preferring to maintain their main dwelling on their ancestral land and cultivate their own land. To counter this tendency of ministers struggling to be appointed close to their own homes, some Protestant denominations made it compulsory to leave home and settle in the parish assigned to them.⁵² In this regard, Protestants had less reason to want huge land holdings compared to Roman Catholics who argued that, among other reasons, their religious communities living on the church compounds needed the space.

At this stage three observations can be made in relation to the churches’ competition for land. There was the introduction of the concept of buying and selling, the size of the lands acquired and the subsequent motivation for individuals to follow the

⁴⁹ Rapports Annuels, 1923/24, p.370. tr. P. Nz.

⁵⁰ Linden, I. *op. cit.*, p. 168

⁵¹ See Anet to Frank, 5 September 1923

⁵² Munyagisaka, P., *op. cit.*, p.33

church's example. Taylor noted that "many pro-Hutu priests approved the privatisation of land, seeing it as a way their Hutu followers could permanently evade subjugation to the Tutsi."⁵³ In addition the creation of mission stations throughout Rwanda altered land holding structures, more land for the Church and less for the peasant, and led to social exclusion of many Rwandans. In the process money played an important role in the transfer of land between individuals.

This is why the abolition of *ubuhake* that led to the redistribution of land and cows in 1954 did not have much impact on the socio-economic exclusion that characterised the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Although during the early years of the 1960s, the government adopted a policy that aimed at equality in the distribution of land resources⁵⁴, this was an ideal that was never achieved. On the contrary, as early as the 1970s the process of concentration of land in the hands of the few intensified. Those in power and administration purchased large lands, pushing their previous owners into destitution. Ironically these lands were not even put to intensive production. A study carried out by Catherine André in the prefecture of Gisenyi, north-west of the country, showed that 20.9% of the arable land had been subjected to selling/buying contracts against 4.6% of land rented out. These sales were illegal in the sense that no local authorities had ratified them as the Rwanda law required. According to André, one of the main reasons that pushed people to sell their land was unpredictable circumstances: "the majority of land sales are made 'under distress' that is sales carried out to deal with unexpected expenses, or following a series of failures in the sale of goods for consumption, the sale of a piece of land represents the last resort to obtain liquidity."⁵⁵

This competition for land resources among people with unequal access to them led to alarming disparities. By the 1980s, it was estimated that 43% of rural families owned only 15% of cultivated lands, with an average landholding per family of less than 0.75 ha. At the other end of the spectrum, 16% of families owned 43% of lands that were arable, but not efficiently used for production.⁵⁶ These lands produced six times

⁵³ Taylor, C. C., *op. cit.*, p. 59

⁵⁴ Gasana K.J., James, *Church-State relations and other factors relating to the Hutu-Tutsi antagonism in Rwanda*. A paper presented at The Conference of Central Africa Health Care Organisation, Winona Lake, April 26, 1997, p.4

⁵⁵ Catherine André, 'Evolution des droits fonciers au Rwanda: une main invisible', Rapport préparatoire de la commission 2 du 11ème congrès des économistes de langue française, 1994, pp. 9, 17-18. See also Overdulve, C.M., *Le Défi des Pauvres: de la fonction diaconale de l'Eglise au Rwanda*, Butare (Rwanda): Faculté de Théologie Protestante, 1991, pp.93-99

⁵⁶ Gasana K. James, *op.cit.*

less than the small plots of less than 2 hectares.⁵⁷ Thus poor rural families were squeezed onto steep unproductive terrain, where soil was constantly removed by erosion. These problems contributed to the creation of a situation where misery, endemic famines and diseases were the everyday plight of peasants who became socially and economically more marginalised.⁵⁸

By the 1990s land was the main problem for hundreds of thousands of landless people mainly the youth. They flooded into towns hoping for a better life. Their coming coincided with the start of the war between the RPF and the Rwandan government and the resumption of political parties. These had been suspended in the mid-1960s shortly after independence. It was delinquent youth that both the RPF and the Rwandan ministry of defence recruited to increase their armies but more importantly it was from the same source that the main political parties recruited their militias.

Another connection between competition for land and the 1994 genocide can be illustrated by the fact that during the atrocities, local authorities were under pressure mainly from those who carried out violence, to allocate to them the land of those who had been killed. The bitter nonsense of this request was also reflected in the reply of the authorities who said that land of those killed could be allocated if only there were no survivors left in the family⁵⁹. The temptation was for those who wanted that land to search for the survivor, kill him/her and then come back to claim the land. The other problem was in the statement itself: if people could acquire land when their owners were killed, this could be a motivation in itself. In some cases the authorities themselves were quick to take over the properties of those killed.

3.4. 'You shall have just balances and just price...'

Old Testament prophets did not spare their efforts to denounce anything that threatened Israel as a community of God's people. One aspect of the social evils of their time was false weights and false measures. Ezekiel denounced them as something that was destroying the community. 'You shall have honest balances, an honest ephah and bath shall be of the same measure, the bath containing one-tenth of a homer, and the aphah one-tenth of a homer; the homer shall be the standard

⁵⁷ Nsengimana, N. 'La guerre du Rwanda: Determinants internes et externes' in *Dialogue*, Novembre-December 1997 no201, p.35

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

measure. The shekel shall be the twenty gerahs. Twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, and fifteen shekels shall make a mina for you' (Ezekiel 45:10-12). Two elements are contained in Ezekiel's words to the Israelites. Honest or just balances have to go with honest or just prices. The details are of importance in the sense that they prove how concerned was the prophet to establish in this way the fundamentals of just pricing.

Similarly the selling and buying of basic commodities in Rwanda occurred in a climate of exploitation which eventually led to social exclusion. Most scholars on Rwanda agree that trade was introduced as an answer to the problem of provisioning the colonial staff and missionaries.⁶⁰ In the beginning they used coercive measures or negotiations in order to get the food they needed. But after 1914, as a result of soldiers' use of force in carrying out numerous exactions on the local population, the Resident ruled that nobody was any longer to be forced to hand over food without receiving equivalent payment: "we have to give you somewhere to sleep, but nobody will get food if he is not willing to buy it"⁶¹

Meat and milk were the most valuable foods in the Rwandan culture. But they were needed by both the colonial administration and the missionaries. In the 1920s the Belgian administration was confronted with the problem of finding beef for its troops, agents and servicemen; and this, according to Nkurikiyimfura, was one of the main reasons behind the commercialisation of cattle. The majority of meat was exported to the Congo, which was also Belgian territory, to supply the colonial staff and those working in mines there.⁶² Cattle were provided by chiefs and sub-chiefs on a regular basis against a small payment of money and sometimes for nothing. This is why there were difficulties in persuading the chiefs and indeed the local people to bring cattle for slaughter. It was only in 1922 that the practice of slaughtering cattle for sale as meat came under scrutiny. Nevertheless the colonial administration's campaign to accustom the population to selling their cattle was not greatly successful. Till the end of the 1920s force and coercion had to be used to make local people bring animals for slaughter.⁶³ Nkurikiyimfura observed that one of the problems was that the price offered to farmers was still very low; a fact that discouraged them from selling their cattle. However some areas had better deals than others. For instance prices were much higher in Nyanza, the capital and residence of

⁶⁰ See for instance Nkurikiyimfura, J.D., *Le Gros bétail et la Société rwandaise – évolution historique: des XIIIe-XIVs siècles à 1958*, Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1994.

⁶¹ Johansen, *op.cit.*, p. 95

⁶² Nkurikiyimfura, J.D., *op.cit.*, p.173

⁶³ *Papiers Derscheid*, Rukira, p. 56

the king, where a kilo of beef was sold for 3 francs. But even here the looting or forced sale of cattle at a loss continued. Kagambirwa said that Broshgrave and his countryman Pire had intensive trading activities involving cattle at Nyanza in 1935 and 1936, and that King Rudahigwa, angered by the dealings of these two men, ordered Borshgrave to be beaten up in the very market place where he, Borshgrave, habitually slashed the sub-chiefs whenever they failed to provide the number of animals he requested.⁶⁴

On the other hand, the colonial administration continued to force the population to sell their cattle to Europeans and natives who had settled in the newly established mining towns between 1929 and 1940.⁶⁵ This time there was an attempt to regulate the commerce by requiring those who wanted to supply meat to the mining settlements to sign and abide by the contracts.

However this commerce in cattle continued to be subjected to many abuses. In the first days of trading, Borchgrave (one of the notorious cattle dealers of the early period) got the support of the King, the colonial administration, the chiefs and sub-chiefs who organised the compulsory sale of cattle.⁶⁶ Occasionally the sub-chief nominated one person in the clan who had to provide Borshgrave with the animal and it was the sub-chief who received the payment while the owner of the animal went back home empty-handed. Before and after World War II, Borchgrave had acquired from the colonial administration the monopoly of supplying beef to all the mining companies such as the Georwanda and the Somuki, operating in Rwanda; he also supplied meat to civil servants, and to the mining companies of the Belgian Congo. From local Rwandans who were forced to hand over their cattle or be fined he obtained enough animals to satisfy the demand.⁶⁷ The practice was halted when one brave man, Iyarwema, took the matter to the Governor in Bujumbura. The Governor issued a letter which forbade Borshgrave to loot the people's cattle.⁶⁸ Despite this, towards the end of the 1940s, the sale of cattle had already spread to all corners of the country and the number of nationals involved in the cattle trade increased. This triggered anger among the few Europeans who had monopolised the trade and competition increased. Nonetheless the cattle trade continued to soar. After

⁶⁴ Kagambirwa, W., *Les autorités rwandaises face aux populations européens Nyanza (1900-1946)*, 1979, p.125

⁶⁵ De Paternostre, de la M., *op.cit.*, 136

⁶⁶ Nkulikiyimfura, J.N., *op.cit.*, p. 122

⁶⁷ *Archives Nationales Territoire d'Astrida*, Cote 147; lettre de Ch. d'Adesky.

⁶⁸ Nkulikiyimfura, J.N., *op. cit.*, p.177

1946 the king himself, the highest authority in Rwanda, sold his own cattle at the market organised by the colonial administration. Following that example, coupled with some other economic reasons, more natives took to selling their livestock in order to get some money or to increase their income. There were other reasons, too; prolonged contacts with the colonial administration and European enterprises, and under the influence of neighbouring countries such as the Belgian Congo ultimately convinced native Rwandans that it was good business to convert their cattle or at least some of them into money. However this attitude was not shared by everybody. The selling and buying of cattle in itself invalidated new *ubuhake* contracts since anybody who wanted a cow and had the money could acquire it through the market. Those who had the monopoly of cattle and used them in the *ubuhake* system found themselves at the losing end.

The situation was the same with the supply of milk. Apparently there was no problem of milk supply during the first days of the German colonial period. The Germans got their milk-cows from the chiefs without much difficulty. Kandt, the Resident acquired his own milk-cow. In anticipation of World War I, the Germans rented 3000 milk-cows from King Musinga.⁶⁹ It was the Belgians, however, who seem to have arrived in great numbers, who were faced with acute problems of milk supply. Between 1920 and 1940 there were many incidents when they used force to get the native population to supply them with milk. Milk payment was used interchangeably with labour payment or *corvée* that was required by the colonial administration .

During the period 1920-1942, the practice was to bring milk-cows, *inka z'imigogoro*, from all over the country, each sub-chief providing one or several cows. Sub-chiefs got these cows from their subjects and he who failed to collect the needed cows faced punishment or fine. All the cattle were taken to the administrative post in Nyanza where the owners looked after them while they were milked. Milk was used not only by agents of the colonial agents but also by Greek and Arab traders. The colonial administration thought it made sense for these traders to pay for the milk with money and they initiated projects to establish dairies.⁷⁰

Despite their being forced to sell, there were some advantages for the population selling their milk, even at a lower price. Milk payment could help them escape

⁶⁹ Desforges, A., *Defeat Is the Only Bad News*, 1972, p.199

⁷⁰ Nkulikiyimfura J. N., *op. cit.*, p.193

greater suffering from the colonial administration. Bikoramuki and Kabagema observed that this practice of 'milk payment' or *corvee de lait* allowed those who had herds of cattle (mainly the *Batutsi*) to escape the payment in labour and agricultural products that others (mainly the *Bahutu*) were required to perform for the Belgian administration.⁷¹ In reality this was still a harsh injustice since people who brought their milk did not take any money home.

Kagambirwa noted that no money was given against this transfer of the milk from the population to the Belgian administration. The king had accepted this practice and had himself specified where milk should be collected, those responsible for the task and even the number of pots of milk required by the Belgian authorities.⁷² Ironically, the Belgian administration gave the impression that during the period of 1939-1944 "the selling of milk had been for the native, an important source of income".⁷³

During the period between 1942-1957, major changes were introduced in an effort to alleviate the condition of the farmers. It was during this time that the Belgian administration decided to establish dairies to encourage and organise the sale of milk by the natives. However, the process was again morally questionable because of its coercive methods. The message went through the chiefs and sub-chiefs that those who had two cows must sell the milk of one of them.⁷⁴

3.5. Cash cropping: An addictive Process

Whenever the poor are driven out of their land in order to advance the power system, as happened in the case of tea and coffee in Rwanda, export earning may increase but there is no land development to benefit those who live there. The official structures of development co-operation are less and less interested in the promotion of healthy land development where the feeding of the local population is the first priority.⁷⁵

Various theories explain the needs for cash crops. One theory suggests that they were needed for the missionary's economic and food self-sufficiency. They needed rapidly

⁷¹ Kabagema, I., *L'évolution socio-politique du Buganza-Nord des Origines à 1931*, 1985, p.155-156

⁷² Nkulikiyimfura, J. D., *op. cit.* p.194. Nkulikiyimfura observed that the practice had many abuses and many of the farmers were very unhappy. Sometimes, the cattle had to travel a long distance to get to the milk collection site, or the milkmen took so much milk from the cows that the calves died of starvation.

⁷³ *Rapport sur l'Administration Belge du Ruanda-Urundi. pendant les années 1939-1944*, p.86

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Haan, R., *op.cit.*, p.58

to become economically independent of the natives who were little inclined to collaborate with them at the beginning of their work. Economic necessity was proposed as one of the main incentives for missionaries to seek large areas of land and the introduction of cash crops.⁷⁶

The second theory suggests that by embracing cash cropping natives would be able to integrate the cash economy, pay tax and develop trade, but also improve their economic life.⁷⁷ The crops which proved best adapted for this purpose in Rwanda were coffee⁷⁸ and tea. It is possible that for this socio-economic purpose the Christian missionaries encouraged Rwandans to get involved in cash cropping. Missions served as centres of modest agricultural experimentation for cash crops. The White Fathers issued coffee plants to their catechists, who began cash cropping on their out-station grounds.⁷⁹ Plants were sometimes given in lieu of cash payment⁸⁰. There is also much evidence that the Christian missions enabled the cash crop system to be integrated into the life of peasant farmers. According to Louis Roger, Hutus who managed to live under the protection of mission settlements were considerably exposed to the new crops, which they assimilated gradually and without problems. Many of them began to grow cash crops, such as coffee and tobacco, on land sheltered from Tutsi exaction.⁸¹ Out of twenty-four parishes of the Free Methodist Church of the Western Conference, nineteen grow coffee on plots that are owned by the Church.⁸² There are even suggestions that “the clergy was often used to oblige the peasants to integrate the cash crop economy”.⁸³

This time the problem was not how to share the land between cattle and food crops but between cattle, food crops and cash crops. As soon as the German colonial administration started to operate in Rwanda, it had advocated the growing of coffee as a cash crop. The German Resident, Dr. Richard Kandt, had already dreamed of “turning Ruanda-Urundi into coffee lands” though this dream was dashed by World

⁷⁶ Newbury, C., *op.cit.*, 1988, p.64

⁷⁷ De Lacger, L., *Rwanda*, Kabgayi: Imprimerie de Kabgayi, 1961, p.89

⁷⁸ Coffee has since then been the backbone of the Rwandan economy and of the export side of that economy in particular.

⁷⁹ Larquin, Ph., *op.cit.*, pp.59, 66.

⁸⁰ Zaza diary, 8 August 1926; See also ‘Compte rendu des séances de Conseil’, Rwaza, 13 March 1928.

⁸¹ Louis, R. 1963, *Ruanda – Urundi*, 1884 – 1919. Oxford: Clarendon Press p. 169,

⁸² Report of the property committee to the Western Annual conference of the Free Methodist Conference of 1991

⁸³ Michael Chossudovsky, ‘IMF-World Bank policies and the Rwandan Holocaust’, in *Third World Network Features*

War I which put an abrupt end to the German presence in Rwanda.⁸⁴ The Belgian administration that replaced the German did not abandon the plan: force and coercion⁸⁵ were used to make the population grow coffee plants (the importance of cash was not yet fully appreciated), though evidence suggests that gradually Rwandans found that it was financially rewarding to grow them. The 1952-1962 plan for the economic and social development of the Belgian Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi aimed, among other things, at the “progressive intensification of the native cultivation of the arabic coffee-shrub, one of the few cultures which are well adapted to the conditions of medium and climate and at the same time offer profitable outlets for important production”. Coffee production which was then about 7,800 tons of marketable coffee, was expected to rise to 15,000 tons in ten years. Overall agricultural production for export had to rise in the same proportion.⁸⁶

Although the ten-year plan announced that the amount of agricultural land would be increased, from 3,257,930 acres to 3,590,400 acres (out of the total of 5,542,680 acres), foodstuffs got only a slight increase (31%) compared to the 155% increase in export crops like coffee and tea.⁸⁷

Since then coffee has continued to occupy more and more land and importance in the Rwandan economy. For instance coffee exports that constituted 32 %⁸⁸ of total export in 1952, soared to 79% of Rwanda’s export earnings in 1992 with 686,000 farmers growing an average of 150 coffee bushes each.⁸⁹ This time the government had found a new justification for growing coffee: to earn foreign currency⁹⁰ in order to pay off its debts.⁹¹ So the temptation to increase the area used to cultivate export crops was intensified both by the state and by individual desire to increase earnings.

In the meantime the cash return for coffee farmers had fallen sharply. Before 1994, Rwanda was dependent on the export of primary products, mainly coffee and tea, to

⁸⁴ Taylor, C., *op.cit.*, p. 58

⁸⁵ Gatwa, T. & Karamaga A., *Les Autres Chrétiens Rwandais, Presence Protestante*, Kigali: Urwego, 1990, p.91

⁸⁶ Belgian Government Information Center, (1952) *A Ten Year Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Belgian Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi*. This plan said that production of cotton was to be increased from 3,700 to 9,000 tons, and palm-oil from 650,000 to 1 million plants.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 58

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.71

⁸⁹ Waller, D., *Rwanda which way Now?*, Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1996, p.29

⁹⁰ Major markets include EEC (75 per cent), USA and Canada (6 per cent), South and South East Asia (5 per cent) and Africa (2 per cent).

⁹¹ Rwanda’s external debt was \$873 million, \$ 120 per capita in 1992. and the debt service was 23 per cent.

generate 95 per cent of its foreign exchange. An average yield of 0.34 kg of saleable coffee was produced from each bush, for which growers received the guaranteed price of 125 Rwandan francs per kilo; this meant total earnings for an average farmer of 6,400 RWF.⁹² In 1990 coffee production had increased by 45 per cent on 1989, which had been an exceptionally bad year. Production per tree averaged 0.49 kg, but the guaranteed price had been reduced to 115 RWF per kilo, so the income was 8,600 RWF. In November 1990 the Rwandan franc was devalued by 67 per cent, so that the farmer's purchasing power fell even lower. The table below shows the position of the Rwandan coffee farmer in relation to his purchase power.

Table 3: Erosion of coffee farmer's purchasing power

Year	Prod'n (kg)	Guaranteed price/kg	RWF income	Exchange rate RWF/£	UK equiv. income (£)
1989	51.3	125	6.400	135	47.00
1990	74.2	115	8.500	225	38.00

Source: Waller, D., *op.cit.*, p.27

The average farmer produced 45% more - and earned about 20% less. As a result the peasants' purchasing power fell and they were tempted to uproot their coffee plants in favour of food crops.⁹³ Farmers who attempted to do so were beaten up, fined and put in prison by the government officials.

Bad as it was, the problem for coffee farmers ran much deeper than that: logically, it is the producers who should determine the price of their products because they are the ones who know what are the costs of production which the sale of their goods has to reflect. But in the case of Rwanda, it was the other way round. The price the farmers got did not at all reflect what it had cost to produce the coffee; producers had no say over the price of it. They did not know where their crops were taken to be sold, they did not know who were the consumers. One of the farmers told this story: "In my area it takes three to four years for a coffee plant to come to maturity and start to bear fruit. In the meantime, the plants need intense care and attention. Harvest is a real nightmare: picking the crops from the plants, peeling, cleaning or washing and then drying. Drying can take something between two to three weeks depending on the amount of sun available. One or two people have to stay at home and watch

⁹² Commission Nationale de l'Agriculture and OCIR-Cafe: 25 ans d'activites et perspectives, Rwanda, 1990.

⁹³ Chossudovsky, 'IMF-World Bank policies and the Rwandan Holocaust' in *Third World Network Features*

for the rain. As you know our traditional weather forecasters are very unreliable. Peeling means taking the crops to a place where a machine has been installed for public use; in my case it was one mile away. Sometimes we have to sleep there because of the long queue of those who also want to use the machine”⁹⁴. Then the farmer ended his story with” “after all this we get 125FRW per kg of dry, clean and good coffee”⁹⁵. Coffee farmers have to comply both with the prices fixed for their crops and with the prices of all goods imported from abroad. It is not possible for Rwandan coffee producers to determine the prices of their product on the basis of a costs/benefit analysis. Not that they are not intelligent enough to cost their inputs but rather that they do not have the power to do so. Market forces act against them, and are beyond their control.

For instance during the 1980s the government assured them a guaranteed price of 125 RWF per kilo. The price was intended to remain stable, despite variations in the world price. Until 1986 this meant that the price paid to producers was less than the strong world price - so the government earned large sums from the coffee trade. But in 1987 the world price began to fall, and in 1989 Rwanda, like other small coffee-producing nations, was hit by the collapse of the international Coffee Agreement, which used to support prices to producing nations. The result of its collapse was that the price of coffee on the London Market fell to half its 1980 level as the bigger exporters, such as Brazil, off-loaded their stocks. Smaller exporting nations, like Rwanda, had no influence over international prices. Since 1989 the world price has declined further, and after three years of heavily subsidising the price - and running up enormous debts to do so - the government was forced to reduce the price paid in Rwandan francs to the producer and to devalue the franc by 67 per cent. As Marysse, de Herdt and Ndayambaje observed, during the period between 1986-1991, the coffee price fell to such an extent that in 1991 it represented only one third of the 1986 price.⁹⁶ In order to maintain the same level of earnings Rwanda had to export three times the amount of coffee it exported in 1986.

⁹⁴ This story was told in 1989 by a coffee grower in my village in local meeting of *Abihinzi ba Kawa* (coffee growers). Local authorities used to call coffee growers every coffee season to admonish, advise and encourage them to continue to grow coffee. Being in my home village for a family visit I represented my father who was ill at this time and could not attend the meeting himself.

⁹⁵ 125 RWF was the equivalent of 50 pence in 1993 when this farmer told the story.

⁹⁶ Marysse, de Herdt and Ndayambaje, *op. cit.*, p. 63

Table 4: Fall of coffee prices on the international markets 1981-1991

Years	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
World prices	*100.0	107.9	120.6	134.5	117.8	144.1	99.4	92.4	73.5	53.4	48.4
	#100.0	95.7	115.1	168.9	98.2	95.5	84.6	88.6	99.6	100.6	91.3

Key: * Coffee (New York All Coffee)

tea (London Tea)

Sources: 1981-1991: *International Financial Statistics Yearbook*, pp 165, 167

-1989-1992: *Banque Mondiale + Fonds Monetaire International*, 1992.

For Marysse and her colleagues two main reasons determined the collapse of coffee prices. There was first the end of the 'Coffee Coalition' in 1987, which triggered the fall of 30% and the 'compositional paradox' whereby the coffee exporter countries, confronted by external imbalances of payment were obliged to encourage more exports, increasing the supply of coffee on the world level. Then excess coffee on the world markets caused the international coffee price to plummet.⁹⁷

Another factor closely linked to this was the devaluation of the Rwandan franc that was decided and implemented during the same period. As a consequence, prices of imported goods soared. Although domestic products were not significantly affected, these two events (the fall of world coffee prices and the devaluation of the Rwandan franc) resulted in the deterioration of the terms of rural-urban exchange and the shortage of petty cash among the rural dwellers. In order to survive some of these people were obliged to sell their coffee prematurely to local traders and big proprietors at half the official price.

Unlike coffee, most tea was grown on estates. But the effect on the peasants was dramatic from the start. In some areas, such as Nkuli (in Gikongoro), tea estates were established in areas that were previously densely settled by peasant farmers. In other areas like Gisovu (in Kibuye) food crops were actually destroyed and replaced with tea. One of the peasant farmers explained: "The men in charge of this project came and explained that the area had been designated a Tea Producing Zone. They have been going all over the hills, staking out the farmers' fields and telling them 'from now, this is land for the project. When you have harvested your potatoes, you will have no right to plant in them in the future'"⁹⁸. Since land belongs to the state, peasants were compensated only for the crops destroyed and not for the land. Compensation for these transactions has always been insignificant. This is why

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos & Vredeseilanden; *Le Rwanda: Et Maintenant*, Bruxelles & Leuven, 1990, p. 15

peasant farmers opposed the practice of expropriation whereby the government paid money to those it forced to leave their property⁹⁹. The central government not only said: 'if we want your land for public use', (road building, development project, tea plantations, etc...) 'We give you the money and you find yourself somewhere else to go'. But it also determined the price of the expropriated land. In addition peasants complained that although employment was provided on the tea plantations, they were not paid enough to feed themselves. Once again the interests of the central government have clashed with those of the individual farmer.

Two other export crops that Rwanda has tried to develop are cinchona¹⁰⁰ and pyrethrum¹⁰¹. When first introduced, cinchona plantations created over-optimistic expectations in the colonial administration, which undertook to persuade or coerce the native population to grow the plants. The cinchona production, 20 tons in 1952, was expected to reach 700 tons in ten years' time¹⁰². Most Rwandans were left with bad memories of these crops, because just after people had invested heavily in cinchona holdings the quinine market collapsed and the government broke its promises to buy the harvest. Furthermore, the government refused to let peasant farmers uproot their trees, in the vain hope that the market would improve by the time they were ready to harvest. It has not, though only rebellious farmers chopped down their plantations without government permission.

The case of pyrethrum was similarly disappointing. In collaboration with the European Development Fund it decided to grow pyrethrum for export. Half of the forests around the volcanoes in the north of Rwanda were cleared for pyrethrum plantations. Waller told how that "The Batwa people who lived in the forest (along with traditional Batutsi pastoralists - the Bagogwe - and mountain gorillas, wild elephant, deer, and buffalo) were ignored by the project, which left them sitting in their clearings while their habitat, the forest, was felled around them"¹⁰³. In fact it was because of this disturbance to the traditional structure and indigenous way of life that an artificial substitute for pyrethrum was developed and the price fell. The

⁹⁹ One of the injustices of this practice was that the people did not have a say in how much they should be compensated for the land they were about to lose.

¹⁰⁰ Cinchona is the raw material used in making quinine-based anti-malarial drugs. Growing as a tree, it is harvested every seven years, when the saplings are chopped down and the bark, which holds the raw material, is removed for processing.

¹⁰¹ Pyrethrum is a natural weed killer, produced from a plant that looks rather like a large daisy.

¹⁰² Belgian Government Information Center, *op.cit.*, 1952, p.59

¹⁰³ Waller, D. *op.cit.*, p. 29

parastatal company in charge of the project, OPYRWA, has never managed to make money, and the foreign exchange generated has been negligible.

Overall the Rwandan experience with cash cropping has had three main consequences. First in the period up to the 1994 genocide, the cash return they earned was so poor that the entire rural market was weak,¹⁰⁴ as was shown by the way in which spending in rural areas varied with the seasons. The amount of money spent on health, for example, ought to vary according to how often people are ill. Instead of that, it varied according to the season, not because illnesses varied, but because the amount of money declined during the hungry months (between two harvests when people were short of food and need help to tide them over) of each year. In a bad year such as 1989, the decline in spending lasted the whole year, rather than just a few months. This resulted in endemic famine and sometimes it took officials a long time to know or to react to the devastation caused by famines. For instance in 1990, it was estimated that 1.5 million people were involved in a famine in the prefectures of Butare, Gikongoro, Cyangugu, Kibuye and Gitarama. But officials played down all the reports about the famine till two Non-Governmental Organisations produced a video cassette that contained disturbing images with testimonies from those affected.¹⁰⁵

Secondly cash cropping took too much of the land that could be used in food cropping; the problem being the distribution of arable land between food crops, cattle and cash crops. This dilemma was real for the White Fathers who thought they should advise the Rwandans on the whole issue of cash cropping. For them cash cropping could be a positive factor empowering people to become economically self-sufficient. But it could be also counter-productive if as a result food cropping was abandoned. One missionary feared that 'the small native producers, too tempted by the lure of profit which exportable products would bring him, may forget or neglect his native crops'.¹⁰⁶ Cash crops created also a conflict of interest between on the one hand, the need of the people for land food cultivation, and the need for forests as shelter for animals and the Twa people; and on the other the need of the government to earn hard currency through the same land and forest.

¹⁰⁴ The situation before the 1994 genocide shows that with a population of about 7,500,000 people, only 300,000 operated in the monetary sector, the remainder being trapped in the subsistence sector of the economy.

¹⁰⁵ Gatwa, T. & Karamaga, A., *op. cit.*, p.91

¹⁰⁶ Rapports Annuels, 1927/1928. P. 274

Evidence suggests that from an early stage the Roman Catholic Church became caught in this moral dilemma. The Rwaza mission encouraged tobacco production in the 1920s by opening a factory which made cigars that were sold throughout Rwanda. Similarly, Mulera farmers, who had managed to raise their living standards above those of simple 'subsistence farmers', providing for other drought-stricken regions out of their food surpluses, found themselves in a situation where they had to make a difficult choice between food cropping and cash cropping.¹⁰⁷ The tobacco-growing industry around the Nyundo mission was then both a threat and an opportunity.¹⁰⁸

In research done in Burundi, which has many similarities with Rwanda, it was found that from the introduction of cash crops, the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church has been far from neutral: the clergy encouraged the population to integrate that crop. In a letter addressed to the government on May 19, 1979, the Roman Catholic bishops reiterated their commitment to the development of cash crops. However in the same study, it was also shown that the attitudes of the clergy were not a determining influence on the behaviour of the farmers. For instance Roman Catholic farmers did not adopt these crops more readily than the pagans, the proportions of cultivated land being 15.4 per cent for the Roman Catholic farmers and 16.3 per cent for the pagans. The study pointed out that, on the whole, Christians grew more cash crops than non-Christians; but that the Roman Catholics grew the least, the Protestants the most, with the pagans in between. In the regions covered by the study, the Protestants devoted a considerably larger share of their cultivated land to cash crops (23.8 per cent).¹⁰⁹ Thus, concluded the study, religious factors have had a greater impact on farmers' attitudes towards cash crops.¹¹⁰ There is a general tendency among sociologists to associate this behaviour with the Protestant ethic that seems to foster entrepreneurship and saving.¹¹¹

In the opinion of some scholars, the introduction of cash cropping did bring some advantages, especially for the impoverished. Taylor asserts that "By embracing the

¹⁰⁷ See Vidal, *Economie de la société féodale*, 52-75, for rich farmers in other areas.

¹⁰⁸ Education Report for 1921, M. 634, AA

¹⁰⁹ Bonvin, J., 1986, *Social Attitudes and Agricultural Productivity in Central Africa*, OECD. Paris. P.43

¹¹⁰ Bonvin, J. *op. cit.* p.44

¹¹¹ In his 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' Weber explained why ascetic Protestants often meet with economic success. His theory maintained that the Protestant ethic, epitomised in the stern religious doctrine of John Calvin, had its believers follow a frugal, work-oriented and rigorous routine which frequently led to wealth.

cash economy as well as Catholicism, these Hutus achieved a degree of autonomy from the Tutsi-dominated system”¹¹². But in the light of the hardship brought about by the collapse of the international coffee price and the shrinking proportion of land allocated to food cropping, one must ask to what extent cash cropping can remain relevant to Rwandans.

The moral dilemma cash cropping posed when it was introduced lives on today. Christian missionaries at the grass roots saw it from the very beginning. Unfortunately when the crisis came the clergy did not react to help both the government and the farmers to deal with the crisis. Christians and non-Christians were left to struggle on their own in a hostile environment in which fines and bribes were their only way out of the trap.

3. 6. Interest on loans and the erosion of reciprocity

One of the most quoted Bible passage on the issue of debt is Deuteronomy 23:19-20: ‘You shall not charge interest on loans to another Israelite, interest on money, interest on provisions, interest on anything that is lent. On loans to a foreigner you may charge interest, but on loan to another Israelite you may not charge interest, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings in the land that you are about to enter and possess’. This distinction between Israelite and foreigner, rooted in the Israelite self-understanding as a people different and chosen by God in relation to other nations, is aimed at ensuring that members of the Jewish community were not economically exploited by their fellow Jews.

The Bible distinguishes also two kinds of debt: debt for immediate needs on which there should be no interest in any case, and debt for economic activities which the borrower was supposed to get income. In the former case, the practice included a certain degree of clemency towards the debtors. For instance article 48 of the Hamourabi code exonerated debtors from interest when a storm flooded their house or when a drought prevented their crop from growing.¹¹³ This was also the context in which Israelite small farmers and moneylenders operated. The farmers were subject to many sporadic misfortunes which would damage their harvest. It is then quite understandable that they were in need of loans if they were to survive through hard times; they needed also to buy seed hoping that their next harvest would be better

¹¹² Taylor, C. C., *op. cit.* p. 59

¹¹³ Leeuwen, C.V., *op.cit.*, p.51

and allow them to pay back the loan and feed their families. These loans were not therefore for trading capital but for foodstuffs (seed corn, wheat, ect.) and relieved a poor Israelite who would otherwise be compelled to sell himself as a slave (Lev.25:47). So a loan in this sense was an act of charity and not a commercial transaction.¹¹⁴

In the case of a debt for economic activities, the Bible, sometimes interchangeably referring to interest and usury as the same thing, warned of their danger for the well-being of the Jewish community. In the Mosaic law, usury was a crime as heinous as theft or adultery. Exodus 22:24 opposes interest on loan and depicts its negative impact on the life of the Israelites as a community. As Leeuwen observed, this prohibition of interest was a sign of old group-solidarity where love and assistance prevailed, with the commandment to lend without interest and make contributions towards brethren as an expression of love, one of the outstanding characteristics of a caring community. For Leeuwen, the prohibition of interest was motivated by the need to protect the borrower against a lender who was inclined to claim more than what he/she gave in the first place. There were situations where lenders in recovering their money, acted in a brutal way, harassing and tormenting the debtor.¹¹⁵ As a pilgrim and created community, Israel had to remember that the earth is God's and that being wanderers required them to share and to provide for each other's needs. "You shall not charge interest on loans to another Israelite, interest on provisions, interest on anything that is lent. (...) so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings in the land you are about to enter and possess" (Dt 23:19-20). In this sense the foregoing of interest is the sign of the old group-solidarity, the building of the community, where love and assistance prevailed, with the commandment to lend without interest and make contributions towards brethren as an expression of love, one of the outstanding characteristics of a caring community.¹¹⁶

The practice of charging interest spread after the exile, and after the fall of Jerusalem with the dispersal of Jews leading many of them into commerce. They gathered in ghettos in the great Hellenic cities like Elephantine in Egypt. In fact a papyri discovered at Elephantine showed that in 430 B.C. members of the Jewish colony

¹¹⁴ Ibid., .p.57

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.49

¹¹⁶ Fagar, J.A., *Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee, Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the sociology of knowledge*, Sheffield: 1993, p.85

there were engaged in what became a characteristically Jewish town of commerce and money-lending.¹¹⁷

According to Leeuwen the practice of charging interest on loans was introduced to the Israelite community by the Assyrians and Babylonians who had cultural dominion and represented a source of temptation for them. For Israel the practice was viewed as usury because its society and thinking were different from that of the surrounding nations. Whereas Babylonians, Assyrians and Canaanites were commercially driven people for whom money had a capital value, ancient Israel was a people primarily of small agriculture, where money did not have any value or use other than of buying goods for consumption.¹¹⁸ It was by falling into this temptation of 'becoming like other nations' that Israel gradually became commercially-minded so that by the time the biblical passages which regulated social interaction were written money speculation and interest on loans were known in Israel. Abuses that came with the practice of lending at interest on loans are at the source of the term usury, *nashak*, defined by Leewen as deriving from the verbs "to bite", "to torture", "to torment", "to harass", because the usurer used to ask or to take from the debtor something he/she did not give.¹¹⁹ In Mosaic law, usury is a crime as heinous as theft or adultery: Exodus 22:24 depicts its negative impact on the life of the people of Israel. To Ezekiel, as to David, the just person is the one who "does not lend at usury or take excessive interest" (Ez.18:8), or the one who "lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent" (Psa. 15:5). It was this kind of lending that occasionally led into slavery.

The fact that sometimes debt led to slavery is reflected in biblical texts that link lending with power and dominion: 'When the Lord God has blessed you, as he promised you, you will lend to many nations but not borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you' (Deuteronomy 15:6). Lending becomes a blessing whilst borrowing is something to be avoided (Dt.28:12). Similarly lending to many nations represents power and dominion. Is not the current pattern in today's economic world that the more one can lend, the more powers one gets; the more debts one accumulates, the more weak and dependent one becomes?

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Leeuwen, C. V. *op. cit.* p. 53 See also Vallely, P., in *Bad Samaritans: First World Ethics and Third World Debt*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988

In the New Testament times, the practice seems to have been accepted as part of the normal way of life. Jesus twice speaks (approvingly) of the investment of money with 'the bankers' so as to yield a proper 'interest' (Mt 25:27, Lk 19:23). The prevailing situation obliged such practice to take place. The limited resources of fellow villagers would have been quickly exhausted, hungry peasants would have been forced to seek loans from those who controlled larger stores of grain, oil or money.¹²⁰ But there are also signs that this practice was more or less regulated so as to avoid exploitation and exclusion of some members of the community. For instance, in ancient Rome usurers were punished by the exaction of a penalty four times the principal sum, compared with only twice the principal sum in the case of restitution for theft.¹²¹ Jesus' social teaching shows his concern for the debtors. It was a time when peasant producers under pressure for taxes, did not have enough grain and oil to feed their families until the next harvest. To render dues to both the state and the religious authorities their only possibility would have been to borrow. This was the picture of the typical life situation from the parables of Jesus. Families or households were indebted in smaller or greater amounts to those who controlled large estates or stores of grain, oil, or money, either the rulers, owners themselves, or their servants the stewards (Matt 18:23-33; Luke 16:1-7). Thus those who provided and controlled credit were the very rulers of the system that placed the difficult economic demands in the first place. And despite the traditional prohibitions of 'increase' (interest) as stated in the Torah, the loans were made at such rates as 25 percent in cases of grain or 100 percent in cases of oil (Luke 16:5-7). According to Horsley, indebtedness resulted in the disintegration of the socio-economic infrastructure of peasant life.¹²² This is why Jesus expects his followers to lend money to those in need, never despairing of its repayment (Luke 6:35). In this case as well as in the case of low interest rate that can help the borrower to survive hardship, debt can paradoxically help and serve the common good.

Greek philosophers condemned usury as the source of evil for their communities. For them money could be loaned but not leased. Aristotle said that

the most hated sort [of "unnatural" money making], and with the greatest reason, is usury, which makes a gain out of money itself, and from the natural use of it. For money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest. And this term usury (*tokos*),

¹²⁰ Horsley, R.A., *op.cit.*, p.89

¹²¹ Goyder, G., *The Just Enterprise*, London: Deutsch, 1987, p.102

¹²² Horsley, R.A., *op.cit.*, p.89

which means the birth of money from money, is applied to the breeding of money because the offspring resembles the parent. Wherefore of all modes of making money this is the most unnatural.¹²³

The Scholastic doctrine of usury goes in the same direction. It holds that the charging of interest is to require two payments for one thing, or to require payment for a non-existing thing; to demand payment both for the thing sold and for its use because the borrower pays for the use as well as for the purchase.¹²⁴ St Thomas' argument against usury derived from Aristotle. For him money was invented 'for the purpose of exchange; and consequently the proper and principal use of money is its consumption or alienation whereby it is sunk in exchange. Hence it is by its very nature unlawful to take payment for the use of money lent, which payment is known as usury'.¹²⁵ But unlike Aristotle, St Thomas recognised that when the borrower uses the loan for purposes of display, the levy of a charge for such a use should be lawful:

He that entrusts his money to a merchant or craftsman so as to form a kind of society, does not transfer the ownership of his money to them. For it remains his, so that at his risk the merchant speculates with it, or the craftsman uses it for his craft, and consequently he may lawfully demand as something belonging to him, part of the profits derived from his money.¹²⁶

Reformers, building on the Old Testament condemnation of the charging of interest, continued to oppose it on considerations of Christian charity to the poor, on the need to curb avarice and to protect the weak. Luther opposed the automatic charging of interest on the grounds that with it 'one seeks and intensifies one's own loss at the expense of the needy neighbour, wanting to fatten and enrich oneself in lazy and idle debauchery, in other words, to parade other people's work, care, risk and loss'.¹²⁷ However, when the development of trade in Europe required capital for investment, difference was made between the peasant farmer needing to buy seed to sow in his field and the merchant sending his ships on long risky, but potentially profitable enterprises.¹²⁸ For instance although both Luther and Calvin had some understanding

¹²³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.10, 1258b

¹²⁴ Viner, J., *Religious Thought and Economic Society: Four chapters of an unfinished work*, Durham/North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1978, pp.88/89

¹²⁵ Viner, J., *op.cit.*, p.90

¹²⁶ Quoted in Viner, J., *op.cit.*, pp.90, 91, 92

¹²⁷ Luther, M., *Admonition to the Clergy*, WA 51, p.351

¹²⁸ Classical economic theory views interest as a reward for 'abstaining' from immediate consumption. It argues that if rent can be charged for the use of property, why can't interest be charged for the use of money? See Mills, P., *op.cit.* p.3

of the kind of productive credit which could assist one to work a fertile property, Calvin, who also rejects interest in principle, had the situation of refugees in mind, who came to Geneva without money but with excellent skills, needing financial assistance before they could make a profit in business themselves.¹²⁹

Luther found another theological argument against usury. For him usury was sinful because it was blasphemous. He fought against usury insisting that since interest is related to the period the lender left his/her money in the hands of the borrowers and that time belonged to God alone, therefore it was blasphemous to take advantage of time. He said: "We enjoy the time, we are carried along in the flow of time, everything is embedded in its time, so the very idea of exploiting the flow of time to take interest on money lent seemed prosperous".¹³⁰ For Mills, another objection to the charge of interest is that to charge a positive compound interest rate would mean that money wealth is allowed to increase at an exponential rate if left unspent; and the financial system cannot indefinitely sustain the exponential growth of debt claims

131

For Luther, Calvin and other post - medieval Christians the question is how lending with interest could be practised in a way that does not cause social and economic exclusion. Calvin recognises that 'it is hardly possible that anyone charging interest should not thereby burden his brother, and so it would be good to bury the names of usury and interest and wipe them out of human memory completely. However, since business dealings are not possible without it, one must always be careful to know what is permitted and to what extent it is permitted'.¹³² And James Spottiswoode maintained that usury could be legitimate 'if no advantage was taken of the poor, if it was practised in accordance with the Christian virtues of amity, equity and mercy, if it exacted no more reward than the agreed interest rate, if it accorded with Civil Law'.¹³³ Spottiswoode's equivocal argument proved unrealistic when, with the growth of capitalism, arithmetical calculations were substituted for ethical and

¹²⁹ Calvin, J., *Commentaries on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, Michigan; Wm.B.Eerdmans, 1948 (tr.)

¹³⁰ Ucko, H., *op.cit.*, p.109

¹³¹ Mills quotes an illustration that was given in the *Financial Times*, 23 July 1990, when the newly independent republic of Ukraine sought to reclaim a barrel of gold deposited at the Bank of England in 1723 by a Ukrainian nationalist. Using compounded market rates of interest, the claim came to £16,000,000,000,000 the equivalent of 130 times Britain's national income (Mills, Paul; *The Ban on Interest: Dead Letter or Radical Solution?* In *Cambridge Papers. Towards a biblical mind*.

¹³² Quoted in Duchrow, U., *op.cit.*, 1995, p.33

¹³³ CTPI, (ed.), *Capital: A Moral Instrument?*, Edinburgh, p.21

theological considerations,¹³⁴ the charging of interest resulted in social and economic disorder within communities.

Socially the practice of charging interest is inherently bound to create problems. Mills¹³⁵ points to a number of flaws embedded in the workings of interest: (i) The unjust allocation of returns between the users and suppliers of finance,¹³⁶ (ii) The misallocation of finance to the safest borrowers rather than to the most productive.¹³⁷ (iii) The pervasive influence of interest tends to bias business investment towards quick return, which can lead to the over-exploitation of natural resources.¹³⁸ (iv) The transfer wealth from borrowers to lenders resulting in the concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer hands. (vi) The rapid flow of financial capital across regions and countries which allows financial variations on a far greater scale than would otherwise occur, with the resultant erosion of community and regional cohesion since jobs tend to follow the flow of financial capital. The whole practice results in 'systematic transfer of money from those who need it most to those who need it least', fuelling the passion of the rich, both individuals and industrial and financial corporations, to compete with one another purely for the sake of economic wealth and power. It deepens the poor's economic dependency and causes environmental damage.¹³⁹

Other social economists contend that the current practice of charging interest is characterised by unfounded assumptions about who are the poor and what they are able to do. There is for instance the assumption that since the poor would not be able to pay (and of course do not have securities), banks would lose their money if they

¹³⁴ For detailed accounts on the demise of ethical consideration in trade, see for example Weber, M., *The Protestant Ethic*, trans. Parsons, London: Allen & Unwin, 1930 and Tawney, R.H., *Thomas Wilson, A Discourse upon Usury*, London: Bell, 1925.

¹³⁵ Mills Paul, 'The Ban on Interest: Dead Letter or Radical Solution?' *Cambridge Papers*. Towards a biblical mind . Volume 2, number 1, March 1993.

¹³⁶ Kennedy, M., and Robertson, quoted in Gorringer, T., *op.cit.*, 1994, pp.166/193 showed that interest involves a significant transfer of wealth to the richest groups of a country's population. Mills (*op.cit.*) contends that it is not easy to get the balance right because when a borrower's profits are rising, the lender receives no extra reward for having the foresight to lend to a successful business in excess of the basic rate of interest. Yet when a borrower's profits are falling, small or non-existent, the responsibility to pay interest at the going rate remains.

¹³⁷ This is why the loan market is biased towards those who have already acquired valuable assets (ie. large firms and wealthy individuals). Meanwhile, small firms and less wealthy borrowers are lent less at higher rates of interest despite offering the prospect of using the funds more productively. This is how lenders are forced to operate in an interest-dominated system.

¹³⁸ A high rate of interest, says Mills, encourages owners of non-renewable resources such as oilfields to exploit their resource more quickly, and to bank the proceeds. Such an outcome could severely damage the interests of future generations.

¹³⁹ Gorringer, T., *op. cit.*, 1994, p.167

lent to them. Such thinking results in economic discrimination against the poor. For Remenyi and Taylor interest practices “discriminate against the poor, who have no collateral, and are applied with rigid faith in the theory that it is riskier to lend to the asset-poor than the asset-rich”¹⁴⁰. The consequence is that poor people, despite their contribution in production and small deposits, are in fact excluded from the profits offered by banking system. Or the poor are rendered incapable of generating profits out of the loans.¹⁴¹

The moral, theological and social arguments for and against the charging of interest also turn around the crucial point of economic justice: ‘in whose interest is the loan going to be working?’ If it is against the poor, then the divine justice is against it. But if it is to finance a hopefully-productive investment, even a profit-related arrangement can be used. If the borrower and the lender could equally share the profits, the risks¹⁴² and the loss the borrower may incur, then lending with interest would not cause moral and theological problems as far as social relations are concerned with the community.

In traditional Rwanda there was the practice of borrowing in which interest was absent: one basket of beans borrowed, one basket of beans paid back; 100 Rwandan Francs lent, 100 Rwandan Francs paid back.¹⁴³ Transactions were based on trust instead of guarantees. There was no need for signatures; but in cases of uncertainty, the lender could call two or three witnesses to oversee the transactions. This form of lending was governed by other values than direct expectation of interest in the sense that there was little consideration given to mathematical calculations of profits.

¹⁴⁰ Remenyi, J. Taylor, B., ‘Credit-Based Income *Christianity and economics in the Post-Cold War Era. The Oxford Declaration and Beyond*. Generation for the Poor’ Edited by Schlossberg, H., Samuel, V. and Sider, R.J. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publisgiung p.47

¹⁴¹ See Jeffrey Ashe, ed., *The Pisces II Experience I: Local Efforts in Micro-Enterprise Development. II: Enterprise Development: Case studies from Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Kenya and Egypt*; Washington: USAID, 1985; Bruce R. Bolnick, “Financial Liberalisation with Imperfect Markets: Indonesia during the 1970s,” *Economic Development and cultural Change*, April 1987, pp.581-599; Farbman, M., ed., *The Pisces Studies: Assisting the Smallest Economic Activities of the Poor* (Washington: USAID, 1981); Norton Jacobi, “Loan Principles that Have Worked in Sri Lanka,” *Together*, January – March 1988, p.7.

¹⁴² It would be inappropriate to continue to assume that it is the lender only who takes the risks. In a loan arrangement, ownership risks and responsibilities are temporarily transferred to the borrower, who is then under a legal responsibility to repay at the specified time, irrespective of how wisely the property has been used in the meantime. See Mills, P. *op.cit.*, .

¹⁴³ Traditionally Rwandans borrowed in difficult times between two harvests when families suffered a shortage of food. With the introduction of money and the market economy, people started to borrow for investment.

This lending of money without interest, which in most cases took place between two individuals, had the advantage that transactions were easy because the lender and borrower knew each other and maintained some form of relationship. In cases of debt default, things were sorted out easily and there was social pressure for the borrower to abide by the rules.¹⁴⁴

The charging of interest is an innovation in Rwandan economics. It started to spread after 1962 when the Western banking system was introduced in Rwanda.¹⁴⁵ First it took a long campaign to convince Rwandans that somebody else could look after their money and give it back (with interest) whenever they needed it. This campaign went hand in hand with one that encouraged people to borrow money from banks to use for making profits in order to pay back loans. It was hoped that both the depositors and borrowers were motivated by the wish to make profits and the threat that their money might be stolen if left in the home or lost if carried in their pockets.¹⁴⁶ Banking services expanded fast in the 1970s and 1980s so that by the 1990s Rwanda was one of the African countries best served in terms of banking and finances. Beside the National Bank that guarantees the others, there are the 'Banque de Kigali' (BK), 'Banque Commercial du Rwanda' (BCR), 'Banque Continentale Africaine du Rwanda' (BCAR), Banque Rwandaise de Developpement (BRD) and 'Banque Populaire' which had outlets in almost every commune.¹⁴⁷ In 1990 interest rates varied between 9 – 12%.¹⁴⁸

Lending with interest carried with it four main consequences to the quality of relationships that Rwandans had developed. Firstly the relationship between the lender and the borrower disappeared since banks played the role of intermediaries linking the actual owner of the assets and the borrower. Secondly banking services meant that the interest that the borrower had to pay back needed to be shared between the bank and the depositor, increasing the burden of the borrower. Thirdly,

¹⁴⁴ With small income-generating projects sponsored by both the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda and the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda, it was noted that social pressure was largely more effective in making people pay their debts than in cases of legal contracts.

¹⁴⁵ Most of the financial institutions were introduced after 1962, the year of independence. The National Bank in 1964, the 'Office des Chèques Postaux' in 1962; the 'Caisse d'Epargne' in 1963, the Caisse de Crédit à l'Habitat rural' in 1964; the Commercial Bank of Rwanda in 1962 and the Banque de Kigali in 1967. See de Paternostre, *op. cit.*, pp.329/335

¹⁴⁶ With the kind of housing that prevailed in Rwanda, it was easy for burglars to break into houses.

¹⁴⁷ At that time Rwanda had 144 communes. The aim of the 'Banque populaire' was to have an outlet in every commune by the turn of the century.

¹⁴⁸ Gasana, J., *Commission Nationale d'Agriculture: Resume Appuis à la Production Agricole*. Centre IWACU, Kigali, 1991, p.1

there were problems related to the process of borrowing itself: filling in the application, the complication of the language used, the lack of information for the borrower and the time of following up the application were too complicated for most of the potential borrowers to understand. Fourthly there was the problem that many Rwandans had no access to bank loans. Banks were available only in towns and served a small elite composed of civil servants and few traders and business people who fiercely competed for the loans available.¹⁴⁹ As a consequence, not only could the majority of Rwandans not get access to loans, but also bribery became institutionalised since almost every borrower was expected to leave one tenth of the loan in the hands of bank officials.¹⁵⁰ Bank managers were bribed to overlook weaknesses in specific projects, or to offer loans to people who were not going to be able to pay back. This is how in most cases the borrower had to resort to fraud and tax evasion in order to make excessive profits to cover the bank interest and the money paid in bribery. The main loser in this complex game was the poor person in the village.

Eleezer Kajeguhakwa¹⁵¹ is a typical example of many individual Rwandans who went through the harrowing experience of borrowing money from the bank and defaulting in their repayment. He borrowed four million Rwandan Francs to start a farming business. He left 300,000 FRW for the bank officials; a 'sweetener' slightly less than the normal figure. He bought a new van to help with transportation, bought some land and then got started. The project never generated profits, and he ended up in serious financial difficulties. He was eventually bailed out by the Congregation of the Neo Apostolic Church which wanted to use him as a minister.

Through these shortcomings in the functioning of the Rwandan banking system many ordinary Rwandan people became convinced that banks were not for them. Loans were given to those already economically powerful, interest was so high that some of the people who took the risk ended up losing their land, home and other possessions which were then repossessed by the banks. The practice discriminated against women who were not legally allowed to open a bank account, nor could they

¹⁴⁹ De Lame, D., *op.cit.*, p.229

¹⁵⁰ As with any form of bribery, there are no written rules for this sort of transaction. One just has to know how things are done in each bank.

¹⁵¹ This man lived in the village next to mine and his case was very interesting not only because of the magnitude of the sum involved (4,000,000 Rwandan Francs, equivalent of £20,000 at the time) but also because of his attitude to the funds he borrowed. He behaved as if he would not have to repay the loan. His project failed dramatically.

get loans without the permission of their husbands.¹⁵² This, combined with their inability to own assets, made it almost impossible for them to obtain any credit from a bank. For instance in 1989, the 'Banques Populaires' (People's Banks) which were very close to the lowest economic stratum of the population, gave just six per cent of their loans to women or women's groups.¹⁵³ Similarly it was not an easy thing for the Twa¹⁵⁴ to rise to a situation where a bank loan became available to them.

The same disappointment occurred when the Rwandan government started to borrow money from outside. Not only did they borrow too much in comparison to the country's GDP, but also they spent the money unwisely on the purchase of arms for dubious purposes. Documents found at the *Banque Nationale du Rwanda* and the Finance and Planning ministries show that most of the \$1,000 million debt consists in balance of payment support and quick disbursements to the State of Rwanda during the 1990-1994 period. Most of the money was used to purchase military equipment (some of which was used in the 1994 genocide).¹⁵⁵ As Dalla Costa & Dalla Costa observed, such national indebtedness has negative implications for ordinary people's lives, and for women's living conditions in particular. It has negative implications for community solidarity and the sharing of their resources and talents.¹⁵⁶

Christian denominations' use of banking services varied according to beliefs and financial capabilities. Generally they tended to unquestionably follow the trend of things as decided by the financial market forces. The Rwandan Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda had a liberal view towards banking services. The Roman Catholic Church for instance, operates its own bank which included a 'bureau de change'. Given the social status and attitude towards Church leaders in Rwandan society, the Roman Catholic clergy were among the small Rwandan élite¹⁵⁷ who could get easy access to loans either for their institutions or for their personal purposes.

¹⁵² Ntampaka, C., *op. cit.*, p.36

¹⁵³ Waller D., *op.cit.*, p.56

¹⁵⁴ Pgymies were always branded as crazy, stupid with a low intellectual ability.

¹⁵⁵ African Business February 1997. p.29

¹⁵⁶ Dalla Costa, M. & Dalla Costa, F.G., (eds), *Paying the Price: Women and the Politics of International Economic Strategy*, London: Zed Books, 1995, p.113

¹⁵⁷ Roman Catholic priests have to undergo a thorough and long training process which take them to the Petit Séminaire and then Grand Séminaire before being ordained priest. As result they are among the few well trained and qualified Rwandans. Thus they occupy a good position both at the local and national levels for reaping the privileges that the Rwandan society recognises for people in this position.

For the Presbyterian Church, involvement in trading activities was motivated rather by a determination to fight against economic exploitation brought about by Arabic traders. Confronted by the influence of Arab traders speaking Swahili, they thought that opening small shops on their mission stations where local Christians could buy what they needed would prevent them from going to the Arabs. "As much as our missionaries were repelled by this liaison between preaching and business, it was equally clear that it was our duty to protect, first those who were connected with us, then the entire people, from these disastrous influences, and to offer them, at prices which corresponded to their true value, goods which were necessary if they were to live healthier and better lives than before, and anyway they had to be protected from exploitation and subjection."¹⁵⁸

Although early Presbyterian missionaries found it difficult to combine businesses with the preaching of the Gospel¹⁵⁹, this changed towards the early days of the 1990s when Rwandan Protestant Churches were openly involved in a race to borrow money from banks for investment. In 1991, the Presbyterian Church borrowed and invested in a guest house in Kibuye.¹⁶⁰ In 1993, the Free Methodist Church borrowed 100,000,000 Rwandan Francs and purchased a three-storey building which it rented out.¹⁶¹

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter argued that the introduction of money brought about profound social changes in Rwandan society which carried a knock-on effect to the principle of *koinonia*. Internally the old ties between people disappeared as Christians grew individualistic, breaking the fellowship in possession and work that the principle of *koinonia* requires.

The selling and buying of lands resulted in the concentration of it into the hands of a small minority and the exclusion of many others. This trend, when seen in the light of the Hebrew Jubilee law that the land belongs to God and should not be sold in

¹⁵⁸ Johansen, *op.cit.*, p. 124

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.127

¹⁶⁰ In 1992 when I spoke to the manager of the guest house, he dismissed the view that a church should not borrow money from the bank for investment. He said he was very pleased that revenues were helping the church in its various activities and he repaid the bank loans on time.

¹⁶¹ The Church committee had rejected the idea but the bishop and the development officials who were under pressure to find alternative funding to supplement stipends for the clergy decided to go ahead with the project without the approval of the committee.

perpetuity, needs to be reversed so that every member of the Rwandan community has a portion of land to plough on. The practice of lending with interest divorced debt from kinship, neighbours and community solidarity.

Money has altered gender relations since its accumulation has led to increasing inequalities between men and women. In addition to the traditional division of labour and spheres of intervention, came the distinction between financially rewarding activities (for men) and financially unrewarding activities (for women). Cash crops were men's domain while food crops became women's domain.

Externally the accumulation of foreign debt led Rwanda as a country to be economically isolated and excluded from the economically viable countries. Christian Rwandan farmers felt much of this economic exclusion as the world economic system that discriminates against producers in Third World countries took its toll.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXCLUSION BY TAXATION

4.1. Introduction

Tax has always been the main source of income by which the state and its functionaries survive. Similarly, the Church and its clergy depend on sums of money offered by, though often required from, its members. Before the current form of taxation came into existence, tributes used to be paid by defeated peoples to kings and army chiefs. The people of Israel paid tax and tribute to their kings and to the foreign nations who conquered them. Biblical accounts suggest that there were circumstances where subjects rebelled and refused to pay tax. Jesus was once asked whether people should pay tax to the state or not. The apostle Paul dealt with the question when addressing the Romans. Answers from Jesus and Paul required the early Christian community to pay tax. When Paul attempted to elaborate on the issue, he gave a theological motivation for people not to evade tax: that all authority comes from God. Therefore obeying authority means obeying God as well, and nobody can claim to obey God and disobey the authorities.

This chapter begins with the assertion that taxation can be an instrument that serves *koinonia* or an instrument that destroys it. The argument contained in this chapter is threefold: (i) that since taxation policy should be aimed at taking money from the rich to serve the common good and thus helping those who have not or who have less, it subscribes to the theological concept of *koinonia*, which involves partnership with God who is the source of authority, and partnership with one another in such a just sharing of incomes; (ii) that the issue of taxation should not only be whether or not people ought to pay, but also whether they can; and (iii) that the state and those responsible for managing the money collected are answerable both to the taxpayers and to God. The Rwandan case will show that when these last two conditions are not met, tributes and taxes result in socio-economic exclusion and conflicts.

4.2. 'To Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's'

Christian – State relations have always been one of the recurring themes in practical theology. Jesus was asked questions about how his followers should respond to state demands such as tax. The relationship between early Christians and the state was not

that smooth. Even during the period of the adoption under Constantine of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire the question of the appropriate relationship of the church and state still needed to be discussed.¹ Three main views have been expressed about Christian obedience to the state. At one extreme lies the view that the world, here represented by the state and Caesar, is helplessly evil, and that the Christian community should have as little as possible to do with it. One of the early authorities on this subject was Augustine. In his famous nineteenth chapter of the *City of God*, the state and the church are presented as two cities, the heavenly and the earthly, which are two societies, that of saved and that of the reprobate.² With Augustine the state is a result of the Fall and a bulwark against sin; while with Aquinas, more optimistically, it is part of the natural created order.³ For Luther, 'God has ordained two governments; the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit under Christ makes Christians and pious people, and the secular, which restrains the unchristian and wicked so that they must needs keep the peace outwardly, even against their will'.⁴ According to this view, since true Christians possess the kingdom of heaven they should leave the kingdom of earth to anyone who wants to take it. As McLellan observes, such a radical and anti-authoritarian attitude in religion, to which both Luther and Niebuhr⁵ adhere, promotes the enhancement of the secular power, a neglect of social institutions, an unwillingness to contemplate the changing of structures, and a general disregard for the social and economic embeddedness of ideas.⁶ Another arresting example is Margaret Thatcher's observation that if the churches take sides on practical issues, 'this can only weaken the influence and independence of the churches, whose members ideally should help the thinking of all political parties'. This seems to amount to saying that the churches can be very influential so long as they do not actually try to influence anything. But in her speech to the General Assembly of the Scottish Church in 1988, she asserted that the distinctive marks of Christianity stem not from the social but from the spiritual side of our lives.⁷

¹ Read, D. H.C., *Knowing Christianity – Christian Ethics*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968, p.80/81

² Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. R. Markus (Arden City: Doubleday, 1972) quoted in McLellan, D., *Unto Caesar: The Political Relevance of Christianity*, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993, p.3

³ McLellan, D., *op.cit.*, p.3

⁴ Luther, M., *Werke* (Weiner Ausgabe), vol.18p.289, as quoted in S. Wolin, 'Politics and Religion: Luther's Simplistic Imperative,' *American Political Review* 50 (1956):38

⁵ See Niebuhr, R., *Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol.2, p.46

⁶ McLellan, D., *op.cit.*, p. 49

⁷ Quoted in McLellan, *op. cit.*, 1993, pp.11/2

At the other extreme lies the view that the Christian community is destined to penetrate the world, to convert its institutions, and by the deployment of sufficient faith and skill and appropriate social action, to create on earth the *koinonia* that can be called the Kingdom of God. From this point of view the world is not a corrupt society from which we are to be rescued, but a system that can be steadily '*koinonianised*'.

Read argues that both views present pitfalls into which Christians have always stumbled. As to the first view (rejection or resistance to the State), not only does the New Testament give no support to the suggestion that Christians have no obligations to the state, but in any case it is impracticable. As to the second, (total acceptance of the state), again nowhere does the New Testament suggest that the state would be totally purified by appropriate social action.⁸

A third view, that takes the Christian community as a minority charged with declaring the pure Christian message and resisting the contamination of secular society and government⁹, stumbles over the problem of conceiving the Church as a holy nation within an unholy nation against which protest must continually be made.

Even Read's 'compromise' argument that Jesus did not intend to direct his audience's obedience to two different Masters- obedience to God within the *koinonia* and obedience to Caesar in the *kosmos* outside, still leaves the debate open for further discussion.

Surely not that the two have each their autonomous sovereignty, for his whole teaching, like that of the Old Testament before him, refuted any division of creation into God's domain and someone else's. There is not a spiritual world where we are to obey God, and a secular world where we obey the government. Instead the picture he gives is one huge circle enclosing everything that is: this is where we render to God the things that are God's – for everything is his. Then, within this huge circle, there is a little sphere where Caesar has his relative autonomy.¹⁰

One of the problems with all these theories is that they attempt to distinguish the indistinguishable. The person -member of the *koinonia* - is at the same time a citizen;

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Read, D.H.C., *Knowing Christianity – Christian Ethics*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968, p.88

and God is sovereign of the *koinonia* and of the state, both at times being inseparable. Read calls upon the individual both as Christian and citizen to live in a way that reflects his/her divine identity, brotherly love and sharing. Thus taxation is not only a symbol of loyalty, but also one of the ways people can share God's gifts to them. The fact Christians and the state came into open confrontation on taxation (as implied by Paul's advice to pay tax) and its role in the building or weakening of the *koinonia* in Rwanda, justifies the following analysis.

The practice of taxation is ancient. The Canaanite kings and the Egyptian authorities collected taxes from early times. There was no taxation during the period of the conquest of Canaan, nor during the days of the Judges. The Israelite tribes started to collect tax with the establishment of the monarchy;¹¹ though 1Samuel 8:11-17 shows Samuel pointing out that the Israelites' desire for a king would involve them in various unwelcome forms of taxation. At first, during the reign of Saul, it appears to have been limited to bringing gifts to the court. Regular taxation was introduced by David in the later years of his reign. For instance in order to collect the tribute David appointed a special minister (II Sam. 20:24) to look after the king's treasures. This minister was responsible for the taxes paid by the people for the upkeep of the court, the collection of booty taken in war and the tribute paid by the conquered peoples. Ten other officials were appointed to supervise the revenues from the agricultural activities. This system of taxation was inherited by Solomon, and taxes were paid in kind. To make the system more efficient Solomon subdivided the country into 12 provinces, each of which had to sustain the king's court for one month (I Kings 4:7) and surplus produce was exchanged for foreign goods (1 Kings 10:15). In Solomon's time the gifts brought by vassal or visiting rulers were an important element in the kingdom's economy (II Sam. 8:10-12; 1 Kings 10:25; II Chr 17:11). Another form of taxation was forced labour, imposed on the Israelites as well as on conquered peoples (1 Kings 1:20-21). Solomon recruited 30,000 of his subjects for his work. While one-third of the labourers were working in the Lebanon the remaining two-thirds worked at home, each shift lasting for one month. In addition to these, 80,000 men hewed stone in the mountains, 70,000 hauled the stone and 3,300 supervised their work (1 Kings 5:13-17). The circumstances in which King Solomon accumulated his wealth through excessive taxes and tribute raised serious moral and theological questions.

During his forty years of military security and prosperity, Solomon managed to

¹¹ Von Rad, G., *Old Testament Theology, Vol. I*, Norwich: SCM Press, 1975, p.58/9

devise a bureaucratic state built upon coercion in which free citizens were enslaved for state goals; the very situation of Egyptian slavery.¹² His prosperity and imperialism drastically undermined the simple structure of Israel's agricultural economy and created for the first time, in a systematic way, enormous wealth existing side by side with profound poverty and slavery. This new social structure was directly connected with Solomon's extensive defence industry. In fact it was upon this conduct that the prophet's judgement that he traded trust in God's promises for the escalation of his defence machine.¹³ The excessive burden of taxation and forced labour by Solomon and continued by his son Rehoboam was the principal reason for the division of the kingdom of Israel,¹⁴ as is clear from 1Kings12.

During the time of the return from Babylon the inhabitants of the country supplied the governor's stable with the 'governor's provisions'. In addition to this the people paid 40 silver shekels to governors before Nehemiah (Nehemiah 5:14-15). In Ezra (4:13) three additional taxes are mentioned: tribute, a tax paid by King Artaxerxes' subjects in the various provinces; custom, a tax on consumption; and toll, a road tax or tax on land. The archaeological findings of jar handles with 'for the king' stamps suggest that payment in kind was well established and used by villagers while city-dwellers paid in silver. In addition to the taxes levied by the kings, half a shekel was paid by each Israelite into the Temple treasury.¹⁵

One of the guiding New Testament texts on the issue of taxation is found in Mark 12:13-17, Luke 20:20-26 and Matthew 22:16-21, when the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus by asking whether tax should be paid or not. The background of the question is that one of the important events at the beginning of the first century was the organizing of a census, which became the responsibility of the legate for the province of Syria (cf. Lk 2:1-2). The census proceeded in two stages: registration and the collection of a tax. The first stage involved drawing up a list of persons and properties; the second was the actual assessment and collection of taxes. According to Echegaray, this second stage took place around A.D.6.¹⁶ During this time, tax was levied on all Jews of 20 years of age and over. Tax collectors were sent throughout the country and by turning Judea into a Roman province the census and the

¹² Brueggemann, W., *op.cit.*, pp.10/11

¹³ Haan, R., *op.cit.*, p.29

¹⁴ Gerhard., von Rad, *op.cit.*, p.58/9 See also *Illustrated Dictionary & Concordance of the Bible*, Jerusalem Publishing House, 1986, p.972

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Echegaray, H., *The practice of Jesus*, New York: Orbis Books, 1984, p.24

imposition of tax put an official stamp on the fact of subjection to the emperor.

The prospect of paying tax raised mute but bitter resistance to the occupying power. Not only were the people not accustomed to paying to a foreign authority what was the fruit of their own land and their own labour, but the system of payment was such that there was evidently a danger of widespread impoverishment as some peasants were obliged to contract debts or sell their lands.¹⁷ The increasingly felt presence of Rome and its direct economic effect on the peasant class were a cause of permanent discontent. Enrolment-related disturbances in which Judas the Galilean played a leading role are recorded in Acts 5:37. An important centre of resistance was Sepphoris, a town near Nazareth, which was completely razed as a result. These disturbances were the first public manifestations of the Zealot movement. The Jews who were employed to collect tax for the Romans were seen by other Jews as betrayers and outcasts of society. Matthew himself was one of the tax officials.

The Pharisees approached Jesus trying to make him say something they could use against him: "We know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" The question can have at least three interpretations. The first interpretation goes along with the Zealots' position; God's people should not be subject to pagan gentile ruler¹⁸. Since the coin with which the tax was paid bore Caesar's image, paying tax could seem blasphemous¹⁹ to Jewish people who held a monotheistic faith;²⁰ or that demands were excessive on the people, who resisted payment. When Jesus saw that the questioners' motive was only to discredit him, He threw the responsibility of choice back to them. But He rejected the Zealot revolutionary position and recommended the payment of tax to the colonial master: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that God's". Jesus emphasized that the laws of the state were to be obeyed, and the fact that this

¹⁷ Ibid., p.25, see also, Northcott, M., (ed.), *op.cit.*, 1998, p.192

¹⁸ Denying the legitimacy of Roman rule, the Jewish population as a whole never accepted foreign authority. They maintained that they were Abraham's descendants, and had never been in bondage to anyone (John 8:33). It was in this context that some Jews refused to submit to the Roman law that demanded them to pay tax.

¹⁹ The Zealots considered it sinful to pay taxes to foreign rulers. Seen as collaborators willing to help the Romans tighten their grip on the country, tax collectors and publicans were not popular among their fellow Jews who equated them with sinners or Gentiles.

²⁰ Filson, V. F., *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St Matthew*, A & C. Black: London, 1971, p.234; see also Horsley, R.A., *Sociology and the Jesus Movement*, New York: Crossroad Publications, 1989, p.35

episode occurs in all the synoptic gospels is an indication of its importance to the early church. Both the way Jesus dealt with the question and the interpretation of the answer need appropriate consideration. On several occasions in which the wily Pharisees try to entrap him, Jesus usually responds by undermining the presuppositions of the question. The word render – *apodote* in the Greek original- is better translated ‘give back,’ return to the source from which it came. Just as the penny should be given back to Caesar since it bears his image; so to God should be given back the things that bear God’s image – that is, humankind made in God’s image and likeness. ‘To God the things that are God’s’ has the sense of: give pennies to Caesar, but yourself to God’, an overriding personal obligation which might be thought to include and indeed subordinate the political.²¹

Paul in his letter to the Romans (13:7) reiterated this recommendation to the Roman Christians. This suggests that tax had been an issue among Christians in Rome. He exhorted them to pay tax and custom to government officials out of prudence and necessity: “Therefore, one must needs be subject, not merely for fear of the wrath, but also for conscience’ sake... Render to all their due, tribute to whom tribute is due, taxes to whom taxes are due, obedience to whom obedience is due, honour to whom honour is due” (Rom.13,5-7). During this time tax was levied on persons and property while custom was levied on imported and exported goods. Paul reiterated the uncompromising instructions of Jesus, that taxes should be paid to the state.

Both Jesus and Paul seem to be responding to a situation in which some citizens deliberately chose to resist the law of paying tax. This could result in chaos and anarchy. In this sense human authority is seen as a necessary restraint on evil-doers and for the maintenance of public order. As Yoder noted, even tyranny is better than chaos and therefore people should submit to it.²² Tax evasion could also put unnecessary burdens on the few who did pay tax. Morally this is not acceptable: “It appears unreasonable to expect good citizens, who certainly are in the minority, to be obliged in conscience to pay taxes, whereas so many others openly repudiate the moral obligation, if there is one. It seems unjust that good people should feel an obligation to be mulcted and to pay readily, in order to balance the evasions of so many”²³. It is for the sake of society as a whole that Jesus and Paul commanded that people should not evade the responsibility of paying tax to the state which has duty

²¹ Bruce, F., ‘Render Unto Caesar’ in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. Moule, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 62

²² Yoder, J. H., *The Politics of Jesus*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1972, p.144

²³ Davies, H. S.J., *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, vol.2: Commandments of God, Precepts of the Church. London: Sheed & Ward, 1946, p.339

to maintain public order. Those who bribe tax-collectors and thus avoid payment of tax, those who resist tax law, and the tax-collectors themselves who accept the bribes, sin against justice and must make restitution.²⁴ By these means *koinonia* is encouraged, and in turn encourages its members to take an active part in the work of the state. This cannot be done by undermining respect for the law, but by upholding the necessity for justice and the use of the law.

However, Jesus' answer to the Pharisees and Paul's recommendation to the Romans both leave unanswered questions. For instance, what are the tax and customs levied for and how are they used? What should be done if the subjects do not have the means to pay their dues? In many circumstances, the question is not only whether or not it is right or not to pay tax, but also whether citizens can afford it, or whether its use is justifiable.

In the time of Jesus customs were paid on the value of goods, in Galilee and Peraea to the Herods, and in the Roman province of Judea to the Procurator as agent of the Roman government. They were collected through a network of customs houses that covered the entire country by tax collectors who embodied and made visible the whole system of exploitation. They became objects of hatred, not only because they took advantage of their office to demand a larger tax than the one allowed by Roman law, but also because they were Jews in the service of a foreign nation. Those who exercised this office symbolised the arbitrary and uncontrolled way in which the oppressed population was ruled. According to Horsley, one of the decisive reasons for the explosive situation in Palestine was the struggle between the Romans and the Jewish élites for the profits from taxation. Roman and Herodian taxes were felt to be oppressive and there were religious taxes in addition to the state ones.²⁵

The second group to profit by the situation were the Jews involved in commerce: the great merchants, the landowners, and the aristocracy, all of whom colluded with the imperial authorities and acted as intermediaries between them and the masses of their own people.²⁶ The profits of trade probably went into the hands of a limited number of rich merchants who did not disclose their incomes for tax purposes. The Romans squeezed these profiteers, and put the money into public building and not to benefit the poor.

²⁴ Ibid., p.340

²⁵ Horsley, R.A., *op.cit.*, p.20

²⁶ Echegaray, H., *op.cit.*, p.34

The local Jewish government represented by the Sanhedrin under its president the High Priest, worked for Rome's interests by assuring the country's loyalty and submission to the empire. Also the Pharisees insisted that the people render up the tithes despite their circumstances (Luke 11:42). Betrayed by their leaders, the poor Jews and indeed the Zealot movement, were full of expectations and hopes for a Messiah who would free them from such exploitation. So Jesus' answer to the question about tax must have seemed to them a contradiction of his compassion for the multitudes who had become like 'sheep without a shepherd' (Mk. 6:34; Mt. 9:36). Other critics have seen in Jesus' reply an attempt to distance himself from the revolutionary Zealot movement that believed in the use of violent means to get rid of the oppressor,²⁷ and though he was not happy with the tax system he preferred non-violent resistance. Such suggestions arise from the fact that non-violent resistance was already known in the time when Jesus was answering the question. In one event of non-violent resistance, Jews succeeded in making Pilate remove foreign images from Jerusalem.²⁸ On several other occasions, the choice made by Jesus inevitably meant disagreement and conflict with the prevailing system. He showed how the reign of God was inherently opposed to the profiteering, exclusive and slave-based rule of the emperor and his emissaries. Jesus used the categories of the excluded as proof that he was the Messiah the Jews were waiting for. To the delegation sent to him by John the Baptist (from his prison cell) Jesus referred to the reign of God as a deployment of power in favour of the 'poor': 'the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the good news preached to them' (Lk.7:18). These were groups of people neglected by the system, for whom taxation did not mean anything more than enriching tax-collectors and those who had sent them.

If the system of taxation is to involve the dimension of *koinonia*, if it is to be ethical and reflect God's plans for His people, it should go beyond the process of making the subjects pay and involve issues of fairness, equity and justice in the use of the revenues collected. It should be able to share the burden of the state fairly among all individuals and families. In the matter of taxation, 'fairness' means both vertical equity (those with higher incomes should pay a larger proportion of their income in tax), and horizontal equity (those with equal incomes and equal responsibilities

²⁷ Echegaray, H., *op.cit.*, p.35

²⁸ Yoder, J.H., *op.cit.*, p.93

should pay the same tax).²⁹ This can be determined by two factors: (i) adjustment of taxation as far as possible to the taxpayer's ability to pay, and (ii) setting and implementing functional and personal income distribution structures which take into account the size, growth and composition of national income and wealth.³⁰ These two requirements suggest that the more successfully the taxpayer is made able to pay, the more efficient is the tax source, and that the more the taxpayers adhere to the tax expenditure agenda, the less they will resist or avoid its payment.

Taxation implies an exchange; the taxpayer pays his or her dues and national insurance contributions, and the state supplies various benefits, such as health care and education. Governments should therefore understand their role as being to reduce poverty and inequality, and to advance the health and welfare of the population as a whole through redistributive taxes and other schemes.³¹ As happens in other domains, individuals redress the balance when they judge the exchange to be unfair, so it can be argued that tax evasion is one way in which individuals who believe themselves to be unfairly treated can restore equity.³² Or they compare what the state gets in the form of tax revenues and what the citizens get from the state. Two of the most recognised motivations for tax evasion are inequitable treatment of taxpayers and the misuse of revenues collected.³³ Burden distribution leads to policies such as 'pay as you earn'. A change in the individual's economic position is a fundamental issue in setting the level of taxation.³⁴ The principles of fairness and efficiency demand that those at the bottom should have a low tax rate so that they are encouraged to participate in paid work. While neither Jesus nor Paul addressed this difficult question directly, the second half of Jesus' answer points to a higher level of understanding of tax. Jesus says that Jews should give to God what they have from him. This was a statement which left the questioners who were expecting to get a yes or no answer to decide their own response. For some commentators, this points to Jewish loyalty to God: Made in God's image, living under him as their Lord, continually receiving His gifts, and bound to Him by His covenant, their tie with God is far stronger than their bond with Caesar³⁵. No doubt the Pharisees would find this

²⁹ Walter, T., *Fair Shares? - an Ethical Guide to tax and social security*, Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1985, p.44

³⁰ Recktenwald, H.C., *Tax incidence and Income Redistribution: An Introduction*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1971, p.17

³¹ Northcott, M., *op.cit.*, p.33

³² Webley, P. et al., *Tax evasion: An experimental approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.55

³³ *Ibid.*, p.53

³⁴ Recktenwald, H.C., *op.cit.*, p.65

³⁵ Filson, V. F., *op.cit.*, p.235

demand unnecessary, since they believed they carried it out already, though their disappointment of not being able to trap Jesus was probably counterbalanced by Jesus' dismissal of the Zealots' argument.

'Giving to God what is His' can also be understood in the limited sense of Malachi 3:8 where the prophet summons the people of Israel not to withhold their Temple offerings. These contributions to the Temple constituted the income of the priests and the Levites.³⁶ The people of Israel were accused of cheating or robbing whenever they failed to pay their Temple dues which consisted of tithes (the tenth part of the harvested goods) and contributions. The practice was an ancient institution of unknown origin, varied in its applications at different times. For instance in Malachi and Nehemiah (13:5), it indicates a special and voluntary contribution for the priests and the temple. However, failure to obey this instruction could bring a curse on the people and the community.

How does loyalty to God relate to the area of tax and temple offering? Filson noted that both practices imply ties with God and with one another. These ties are stronger than ties with the representative of the state and that of the priest as the head of the temple. The moral and theological justification for targeting taxation policy towards sharing and distribution finds its roots in this loyalty to God. One of the main functions of a just tax system is that it should favour the poor and attempt to eliminate poverty. In doing this the heaviest burdens should be borne by the broadest backs.³⁷ Failure of taxation by the lack or misuse of it leads to socio-economic exclusion as it serves a few individuals who manipulate the system, or who have unrestricted access and control of economic resources. Obedience to the State in this respect is justified by its duty to redistribute that wealth: "the ideal State cannot allow excessive destitution to exist side by side with great wealth, nor the accumulation of great fortunes by the few to the detriment of the many".³⁸ Similarly, offerings and contributions made to churches are not so that the clergy can enjoy and live a luxurious life while those who donate the money live in poverty. The failure of the state to administer fairly the tax collected, and the failure of the Church to use its required donations in the service of the whole Church, cheat and rob both God and the people. Whenever taxation and church contributions are geared to benefit those in power, they create and sustain socio-economic exclusion and fail in their building of

³⁶ Ogden, G.S. & Deutsch, R.R., 'Joel & Malachi: A Promise of Hope – A Call to Obedience' in *International Theological Commentary*, Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, p.104

³⁷ Forrester, B.D. & Skene, D., *op.cit.*, p.49

³⁸ Davies, H.S.J., *op.cit.* p.168

The Rwandan case presents a situation in which the tax system favoured the rich and powerful and contributed towards exclusion and marginalization of a large section of society. The problem lay in mentality as well as in structure. In the pre-colonial period, the Rwandan monarchy operated a top-down economy whereby tax in kind (in the form of *ikoro*, material goods, *akazi*, labour) was levied from their subjects. The *ubuhake* system discussed in chapter two meant that people had limited means from which they could pay tax.

In the colonial period, on top of the existing tax in kind, the introduction of another tax in the form of money meant that tax had to be paid to two masters: the king and the colonial administration. With the coming of the Christian missionaries, the Church offering was viewed by some as yet another tax.

In the post-colonial period, the new political and economic elite found a fresh source of income in the form of foreign aid, with accompanying corruption and favouritism, which meant that the old *ubuhake* ties re-emerged and settled in an even more advantageous form in the new administration. As state resources increased both from within and outside, competition for them increased too. This in turn led to economic exclusion and violence. People asked themselves how could the church claim to be the body of Christ when some of its members were economically excluded, and living in sheer poverty while their fellow Christians lived in abundance? How could the love of God be adequately preached to and felt by those who were excluded?

4.3. Tribute and taxation – The losers and the winners

The early forms of taxation were tributes paid to the Rwandan kings and army chiefs on the conquest of new lands. Rwanda as a nation evolved from a small political organisation in central Rwanda. After successful battles, new areas were added. The first tributes have to be understood in this context; as a punishment and as a sign of submission imposed on the losers. As the area under the Rwandan king increased, more organisation and administration were needed to keep the people under control. The country was divided into numerous administrative units; chiefdoms and then sub-chiefdoms in a pyramidal structure. Each chiefdom was under a noble of the King's lineage, i.e. the Nyiginya clan and each sub-chiefdom was under two state functionaries. There were 'Hill chiefs' (*abanyabutaka*) and 'cattle chiefs'

(*abanyamukenke*).³⁹

Following this expansion, the king imposed another form of tribute, *ikoro* (tax in kind), which was no longer related to battles, but to the needs and maintenance of the ruling class. The 'hill chief' was responsible for the collection of agricultural products, and for requisitions of militia and labour who were put at the service of the king. The cattle chiefs were responsible for the collection of milk, and bulls for meat and for witchcraft rituals for the palace. Tax was transported on the head to the sub-chief. The sub-chief subtracted his share from the tax collected and took the rest to the chief who did the same (they retained a portion, of about one third, making their offices avenues of accumulation) and took the rest to the king.⁴⁰ As Kamukama noted, state functionaries and Nyiginya nobles could acquire many cattle for themselves as they collected them for royal herds.⁴¹

The coming of the Europeans brought the introduction of the modern monetary system which operated with coins (rupees). The barter system gradually gave way to the new medium of exchange, while tax began to be collected in rupees. In the opinion of some observers, the monetary system lessened the difficulties of trade, of the collection of tax and its storage. However it took some time for the German colonial authority to get the system started. In fact till early 1900s it was not properly organised. It was only in 1912 that the new tax began to be systematically collected. Those who could not get access to a salaried job, paid in kind for example a hundred eggs or ten chickens. This tax was at first levied only on persons, but a few years later was extended to cattle.⁴²

The alternative option to pay in kind was removed when the German administration requested that all tax be paid in money. Later on the colonial government developed three different channels through which this would be done: (1) a minimal personal contribution equal for every male aged from 18 onwards regardless of income; (2) Income tax expressed in terms of percentage of salary; and (3) corporation tax paid by businesses on profits made.⁴³ It embarked on the idea of transforming the traditional rulers, including sub-chiefs and chiefs, into bureaucrats paid out of the

³⁹ de Paternostre, B., *op.cit.* p.47

⁴⁰ Mkulikiyimfura, J.N., *op.cit.*, p.92

⁴¹ Kamukama, D., *op.cit.* p.14

⁴² de Paternostre, B., *op.cit.*, p.90. See also Honke, G., 'Pour L'Empereur et le Roi: L'établissement de la domination coloniale allemande' in Honke, G. (ed.) *Au Plus Profond de l'Afrique, Le Rwanda et la colonisation Allemande 1885-1919*, Peter Hammer Verlag GmbH, Wuppertal, 1990, p.121

⁴³ de Paternostre, B., *op.cit.*, p. 82

taxes collected by themselves from their subjects, thus removing them from the traditional system whereby they were paid in kind by their subjects. Although the German administration and the Rwandan monarchy had forged a tenuous political alliance, the introduction of taxation brought conflicts as interests diverged. This is why King Musinga opposed the tax, recognizing it as an attempt to diminish his influence. And the ruling class continued to extract their share of the products in kind, rather than through the abstract medium of money.⁴⁴ For ordinary people, already economically excluded, the new tax was an addition to the existing burdens they bore caused by the *ubuhake* system.⁴⁵ For them dual system meant dual burden.

A new development at this stage was that beside the Nyiginya aristocracy emerged a new category of state functionaries, the tax collectors, who constituted a class that also thrived on the surplus produced by their subjects. This exploitation cut across the ethnic divide in that the pastoralists who were not of the ruling clan (other Tutsis), as well as the agricultural Hutus and Twas, were all subjected to the payment of excessive tax to the Nyiginya aristocracy and their functionaries. To guarantee a permanent source of produce, loyalty was a fundamental prerequisite. The Nyiginya, therefore, found it necessary to entrust administration to those of their close families. This differentiated Rwandan society between the ruling class which monopolised the resources and the produce of the community, and the ruled who owned nothing but had to produce and hand over their produce. Socio-economic exclusion resulted and the gap between the wealthy ruling class and ordinary people grew wider and wider as time passed.⁴⁶ Appropriation of both labour and its produce not only harboured germ cells of exclusion, but also increased the profits of the agricultural and pastoral activities of nobles and state functionaries.⁴⁷

Nevertheless as the colonial policy encouraged the entry of political authorities into the money economy, their need for agricultural workers increased. Beside compulsory activities required by the colonial administration such as tree planting to fight erosion, chiefs planted firewood and from these woodlands they produced additional income. Many chiefs also undertook cultivation of other marketable crops such as fruits and vegetables. The unpaid labour available to them thus contributed substantially to their enrichment. In this sense colonial policy provided both the labour and the market for chiefs to accumulate wealth. At a certain time, the situation

⁴⁴ Taylor, C.C., *op.cit.*, p.57

⁴⁵ de Paternostre, B., *op.cit.*, p. 90

⁴⁶ Kamukama, D. *op.cit.*, p.13, See also Newbury, *op.cit.*, 1988, p.65 and Linden, *op.cit.*, 1977, p.97

⁴⁷ de Paternostre, B., *op.cit.* p.92

got extremely difficult for the labour force as different groups entered into competition for it. Linden pointed out that the colonial authorities, the White Fathers, the Court and the ruling class were all competing for the one commodity Rwanda could supply in abundance, the labour of the peasantry.⁴⁸ In the absence of a proper reward to regulate the supply and demand of labour, in the absence of moral guidelines and Christian principles ordinary Rwandans had to endure more hardship, oppression and exploitation which resulted in extreme socio-economic exclusion.

Two different views have been expressed as to the morality of the practice of tribute and the traditional tax. According to one view tribute in labour and produce can be seen in the form of exchange based on consensus and a shared understanding about mutual obligations.⁴⁹ For Claessen, Skanlik and Trouwborst, the practice of tribute redistribution and exploitation are related. In the system of 'redistributive exploitation' the principle is that a collection of large quantities of food and other goods and of corvée labour is made, while at the same time 'the sovereign expends and gives away virtually equivalent quantities..⁵⁰ But Trouwborst points out that this can be true only if to every form of exploitation there corresponds a form of redistribution; which is not an easy task for the ruling class to achieve. He rightly argues that through tribute and *corvée* the population is bound to its rulers in many intricate ways and in a web of fears, expectations and feelings of power as well as of dependence. The rulers know that in order to keep a grip on the population and retain their source of income, they have to maintain this system in place. Trouwborst argues further that the system symbolically reflects the whole gamut of relations binding the subjects to their rulers and that all kinds and grades of prestige, status and relative wealth which are reflected in the things given and received, may give much satisfaction to the people involved.⁵¹

According to the other view, tribute represents a form of exploitation, antagonism and oppression which result in economic exclusion⁵². This second view applies to the Rwandan case because consensus and shared understanding were never considered before tribute and taxation were decided upon. The ruling class and later on the colonial power decided unilaterally that people should pay and how much they

⁴⁸ Linden, I., *op.cit.* p.104

⁴⁹ Trouwborst, A. A., 'From Tribute to Taxation: On the dynamics of the early State' in *Studies in Human Society*, Vol.2. 1987. Leiden, New York, Kobenhavn-Koln, p.128

⁵⁰ Quoted in Trouwborst, A. *op.cit.*, p. 129

⁵¹ Trouwborst, A. A., *op.cit.*, p.128

⁵² *ibid.*

should pay. Even in the mobilisation of labour for 'public' projects, such as road-building, people had no say. According to Codere the subject population was 'oppressed and terrorised and had accepted what they had to accept as they did what they had to do'.⁵³ Rwabukumba and Mudandagizi⁵⁴ talk about the *corvee* as "the most hated and humiliating manifestation of the servitude of the Hutu". Vidal noted that taxation in tribute led to private accumulation of wealth, particularly to the growing enrichment of chiefs and that there were extreme differences in wealth between the rich and the poor in ancient Rwanda.⁵⁵

In theological terms the practice of *corvee* raises two fundamental questions: the nature of work and its purpose. One of the distortions has been to view work as God's punishment after the fall of Adam. Human beings are forced to work (Gen.3). But this argument ignores that God's calling to work preceded the fall. Adam is told to till and look after the garden (Gen.13). According to Leenhardt, a noble mission for human beings is to:

Cultivate God's work, to bring to fruition for him the good things hidden within it, from promise to power; to lead creation to a destiny, secret up to now, by working on it intelligently. Creation is waiting for God's children to work on it and make it blossom. This work will not only be intelligent, it will be accomplished under the control of a heart in filial communion with God.⁵⁶

It is only after Adam had strayed away from fellowship with God that the myth of Genesis presents another dimension of work. Adam is expelled from the garden but though work still is essential to human beings, now it is performed without the joy and the success it initially had. For Leenhardt, this lack of joy and success apply to the work that is not carried out in fellowship with God:

For the creature separated from God, work loses its meaning and its beauty; it becomes an uphill struggle for the bread of the body, and that bread does not nurture. ... Human beings mobilise their forces for an activity in which their souls are not interested, for an activity which does not have any spiritual value because it is not linked to God.⁵⁷

⁵³ Codere 1962, 'Power in Rwanda' in *Anthropologica*, N.S., IV, 1, p.84

⁵⁴ Rwabukumba & Mudandagizi, *op.cit.*, 1974, p.21

⁵⁵ Vidal, C., *Economie de la société féodale rwandaise*, C.E.A, 1974, p. 37

⁵⁶ Leenhardt, F. J., *Christianisme et Vie Publique*, Genève: Imprimerie S. Roulet & Fils, p.43, tr. P.Nz.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.44. tr. P. Nz.

By their excessive demands in *corvée*, the colonial masters, and the Rwandan ruling class emptied work of its spiritual satisfaction and made it bad for their subjects and for themselves. They took themselves as masters and lords and disregarded God as present and glorified in the work His people do.

The other aspect of work is that people should be committed and involved in it as a personal and conscious engagement.⁵⁸ People should not be forced into something they do not want to do, or left there as an inanimate tool:

A man does not work like a machine. He is not installed in a factory like a dynamo or a ventilator. There has already been a personal engagement between the man and his work, beginning with the first decisions through which, while he is still open to a hundred possibilities for his life, he finds his way and makes his choice of work. Each man is called to turn to good account what he has received from God along with the gift of life. Therefore he has to have the chance to choose how he can do this in the face of God. Then in this way he will be able to look on his work as a personal agreement binding him to God. If he has not chosen his work freely, it will be just continual labour and his heart will not be in it. It will be simply effort disconnected from his real being, a physical necessity without spiritual value.⁵⁹

This is why instead of joy at work, ordinary Rwandans knew the hardship and bitterness of existence which they had to endure without their choice. Instead of Christians enjoying their participation in the continuing act of creation through their labour, work became like a curse, a symbol of domination and exclusion.

4.4. Taxing the Underpaid and overburdened

What kind of Christian community were the excess of *corvée* and tax going to make of Rwandans? How many of those Rwandan Christians living under the hardship of *corvée* and taxation really accepted that a Christian community to which their employers adhered was divine order? Some would call upon their masters to re-examine themselves the kind of community they had built.

Let them find out, get close, wake up their minds and spirits! Then perhaps they will discover that in that kind of existence it gets more and more difficult to live the normal life of Christians, to offer one's

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.46

⁵⁹ Ibid. pp.46/7

life to God, to pray after a day's work when you are tired to death, and perhaps even harder to pray in the morning for work in which all sense of God's presence has become impossible.⁶⁰

Employers are morally bound to treat their workers in a humane and dignified way, securing safe and decent conditions, giving them reasonable wages, not exacting so many hours of labour that no time remains for rest, leisure, amusement, religious exercises and instruction.⁶¹ The principle of *koinonia* requires Christian employers to set an example in the way they treat their employees. This moral and theological rule raises the question of the just wage which is also difficult to define. According to Davies the standard of wages must in practice represent the living wage for a family (applicable, in proportion, to single workers as well). This should be the amount which would keep him and his wife and family in frugal comfort, commensurate with the conditions of life of the normal worker of his class.⁶² The parable of the labourers is completely applicable to the case. In normal circumstances each man was supposed to get a wage that was in line with the amount of time spent at work. The parable turns this thinking upside-down by suggesting another principle by which every man needed and had right to a decent life.

The Rwandan case suggests that one of the reasons why Rwandans resisted tax was that people could not afford it. In fact it took about ten years for the people to comply with the system. It was only by 1921 that tax started to be widely collected. But this time it had become a real burden on the ordinary people. The amount was fivefold what it had been ten years earlier since it was fixed at five francs for each taxpayer having fewer than 5 head of cattle, while above that it was 10 francs. Only the forced labour or *corvée* was reduced from 142 to 42 days per year. However while wealthy people were allowed to pay the counterpart of their *corvées* in currency, the peasantry was compelled to do the 42 days' labour and other activities the chiefs and *ubuhake* patrons required.⁶³

Beside the fact that wages were very low in comparison with workers' production and their needs, evidence suggests that occasionally even these poor wages were even withheld by employers. As Newbury noted, the average wage paid to workers in the late 1920s was one franc per day, but sometimes European employers would withhold a part of the workers' wages as punishment for various infractions; some

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.50

⁶¹ Davies, H.S.J., *op.cit.*, p.80, see also Code of Canon (c.1335)

⁶² Ibid., p.81

⁶³ Gatwa, T., *op.cit.*, p.

individuals received only ten francs in 24 days. Other employers or their representatives resorted to trickery in order to defraud their workers of a part of their wages. For those who were paid at piece rates, the quality of the articles made used to be a pretext for fraudulent deductions from their earnings.⁶⁴ Overall, private companies offered a better deal than the colonial administration. For instance in 1942, the Protanag company was paying workers 1.50 francs per day, at a time when the colonial government was paying one franc (paid to labourers employed in roadwork and construction).⁶⁵

The increase in tax revenue, which doubled from one million to two million between 1925 and 1928⁶⁶, did not take into account the effect of inflation which reduced the value of the Rwandan franc in the period between 1929 to 1942. In the meantime tax revenue continued to increase. Ironically colonial reports often referred to decreased value of money as a justification for yearly tax increases.⁶⁷ Both poll tax and cattle tax rose dramatically between 1945 and 1960. These two forms of taxes went up respectively from 46 Rwandan Francs and 16 Rwandan Francs in 1945, to 85 and 27 francs in 1950; to 130 and 50 francs in 1955; and to 160 and 75 francs in 1960. The special tax that was imposed as a deterrent on men who had more than one wife (polygamy tax), increased also in similar proportion.

Rural dwellers also suffered from the 'communal work' called *umuganda* which was launched in the 1970s. Every Rwandan of adult age was required to give a half of a day's labor per week towards what the authorities had agreed upon. Some critics viewed it as another form of the colonial *corvées* about which Rwandans retained bad memories: 'The old colonial *corvées* have been replaced with the *umuganda*, a kind of compulsory work carried out on each Saturday.'⁶⁸ One of the main criticisms was that public servants and other salaried workers did not lose anything by giving up that half a day per week whilst the peasants gave up the work they should have been doing on their individual lands and nobody paid them for that. For Willame, *l'umuganda* represented a waste of 100 FRW per day for 1.15 million Rwandan households.⁶⁹ The post-independence republic gave less emphasis to taxation since

⁶⁴ Newbury, C., *op.cit.*, 1988, p. 174.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.176.

⁶⁶ Nyanza Report, 1929; see also de Paternostre de la M., *op.cit.*, pp.109-113

⁶⁷ Newbury, p. 176

⁶⁸ Guichaoua, A. 'Les travaux communautaires en Afrique Centrale', *Revue Tiers-Monde*, Vol.32, no127, juillet-septembre 1991, p.562.

⁶⁹ Willame, J. C., 'Aux Sources de l'hécatombe rwandaise' in *Cahiers Africains* no14, 1995, Paris L'Harmattan, p.142

other sources of revenue such as foreign aid were found and inflated the money in the hands of the ruling elite. The issue of aid and its impact in the process of exclusion of the majority of Rwandans will be discussed in Chapter Six.

In addition, working conditions were harsh. In some areas coercion was used in labour recruitment. Chiefs and sub-chiefs were required to round up people and send them to the colonial administration or the European entrepreneurs. Newbury relates what happened in two brick factories situated 90 minutes' walk from each other, each of which employed 500 men. Unable to find enough workers nearby, the two establishments resorted to the recruitment of men living some distance away. Two sub-chiefs whose areas were located in the mountains bordering Lake Kivu at a walking distance of three to four hours from the factories, were ordered to provide 200 men each; the predecessors of these sub-chiefs had recently been deposed for not having provided a sufficient number of workers. Because of the distance involved, workers had to find lodgings near the brick factories during the week. After working full days Monday to Friday, and a half-day on Saturday, they could return to their homes only for Saturday night and Sunday. The employer apparently provided neither lodging nor rations. Workers coming from the higher altitudes often fell ill while living near the lake, and mortality among them was high.⁷⁰

At the same time earlier exactions and demands from the chiefs and Europeans continued. Beside spending the week away from home at their jobs, these workers were still expected to maintain obligatory cultivation, coffee plantations, and reforestation projects. They were obliged to ask their wives to fulfil these duties or hire somebody among those who were not (for one reason or another) contracted to the Europeans, to do the job. This person received one franc per day, as well as food and lodging - better conditions than the day workers employed by Europeans.⁷¹ Where work for Europeans served as functional substitute for clientship, contract labour offered a means of escaping *corvée* services. For instance in Cyangugu, rather than fulfil the exaction of a sub-chief, people sought economic security through wage labour. Rather than relying on the precarious "protection" which had become exploitation, of a patron-chief, many put themselves under the patronage of an European employer. The situation was more difficult for those who maintained *ubuhake* patrons while holding jobs.⁷²

⁷⁰ Newbury, C., op.cit., 1988, p.175

⁷¹ Ibid., p.176

⁷² Ibid., p.144

This practice further isolated the chiefs and sub-chiefs and transformed them into enemies of the population. As Braeckman observed, the triumph and irony of the indirect administration is that the Germans, then the Belgians succeeded in making local authorities bear the discontent caused by the constraints of colonisation.⁷³ Until 1924 the Belgians directed labour demands through the king who then used them as a punishment. After 1927 they used supervised provincial administrators, as the king's men were the worst offenders.⁷⁴ While the chiefs and sub-chiefs used to cheat by collecting more than required by the colonial administration, at the same time they collected their own tributes and labour while the colonial administration collected its own. In effect there were two parallel authorities to which the people had to obey. This is why in some areas some people went voluntarily to work for Europeans as a means of escaping the demands of the chiefs. Others sought employment in order to avoid forcible recruitment on less favourable terms. In general, work in certain European enterprises was seen by many as the lesser of two evils. When working conditions with Europeans were too harsh, some people escaped to chiefdoms where labour recruitment was low. There were even those who went outside the country to work in mines or construction firms in Belgian Congo, where many others sought work as domestic servants or as skilled and semi-skilled workers.⁷⁵ Newbury pointed out that this emigration only made conditions more difficult for those who remained.⁷⁶

It was to people in a similar situation that Jesus sent his invitation: 'Come here, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest'. For Kierkgaard, this invitation shows how much God cares about the excluded:

It stands at the crossroad, there where temporal and earthly suffering placed its cross, and calls. Come here, all you poor and wretched, you who must slave in poverty to secure for yourselves-not a carefree but a hard future. (...) You despised and disregarded ones, whose existence no one, no one cares about, not even as much as for a domestic animal, which has more value! – You sick, lame, deaf, blind, crippled, come here!- You who are confined to your beds – yes, you come too, for the invitation has the nerve to invite the bedridden-to come! You the lepers! The invitation blasts away all distinctions in

⁷³ Braeckman, C., *op. cit.* p. 33

⁷⁴ Leurquin, *Niveau de vie*, 22-3; see also Linden, I., *The church and the Revolution in Rwanda*, p.180; Zaza diary, 5 August 1926

⁷⁵ Newbury, p. 176

⁷⁶ Newbury, p. 176

order to gather everybody together, it wants to make up for what happens as a result of distinction: the assigning to one person a place as a ruler over millions: in possession of all the goods of fortune, and to someone else a place out in the desert.⁷⁷

Contrasted with Jesus' invitation, the Rwandan situation raises both moral and theological questions. Was the amount of money paid to the workers sufficient to keep them physically healthy enough for them to remain productive? What about the use of coercive methods to recruit workers? How does the practice of tribute and taxation as applied to Rwandans fit in with the concept of *koinonia*? The colonial administrators and colonial entrepreneurs appear to have ignored these questions, since the practices offered them a disguised subsidy⁷⁸. Meillassoux finds the classical economic argument that explains low wages in terms of supply and demand irrelevant to the period of colonisation, because in many African countries, colonial entrepreneurs had to lower wages in order to maintain the workers on the job for a longer period since those from the rural sector would return home as soon as they earned the sum they had set out to earn.⁷⁹

Christian missionaries challenged the European settlers about the condition workers were in, sometimes with little result: 'Missionaries at Nyamasheke Mission in Cyesha, appalled at the exaction being made on people in the region, sharply criticized the government, but to little avail'.⁸⁰ In 1940, Roman Catholic missionaries at Nyamasheke made unsuccessful efforts to convince the Belgian Territorial Administrator from Cyangugu that the demands being made on the population in the production of obligatory crops were excessive. They argued that given the depleted manpower of the region, the high demand for workers, and the poor local soil (not at all fit for the cultivation of potatoes, one of the required crops), the people of Cyesha were doing the best they could and that no more demands should be made on them. The Administrator, who rejected the missionaries' requests, regarded the people as lazy and the local chief as incompetent.⁸¹

However missionaries soon found themselves being criticised for doing what they criticised the European settlers for doing. They also needed to hire local labour to

⁷⁷ Kierkegaard, S., *Practice in Christianity*, Edited and translated with introduction and Notes by Hong, H.V. & Hong, E.H., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, pp.16/7

⁷⁸ Meillassoux, Claude, *Maidens, Meal and Money, Capitalism and the Domestic Community* p. 92

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ "Quelques notes pour le Mwami" in "Daire Nyamasheke" 10 December 1940.

⁸¹ "Daire Nyamasheke", 10 December 1940.

perform different tasks related to their objectives. In some regions the mission workforce grew to considerable proportions, and missionaries competed with European settlers and enterprises in recruiting workers. For instance statistics on day workers in Cyesha (part of Cyangugu prefecture) in 1942 showed that out of 1520 workers, 210 were for two mission stations in the area, 160 for three plantations, and 1150 for three brick factories.⁸² Other missionary stations, such as Rwaza that operated a tobacco factory, may have had many more workers. In fact, at Rwaza, as Linden observed, "the situation took on the character of an industrial mission, with 130,000 francs paid out annually in employees' salaries; this included payment of construction workers, porters and teachers, as well as factory hands, millers, carpenters, sawyers and masons".⁸³

At these mission stations working conditions were not much better than in the European enterprises. Missionaries were strongly criticised for the treatment of their own workers. A cost/profits analysis of the operation at the Rwaza tobacco factory, suggests that Roman Catholic missionaries were taking too much profit from their workers. 'In 1924 Rwaza mission purchased 6,430 francs' worth of tobacco and paid out 3,132 francs in salaries to workers at their small cigar factory; profits from the sales amounted to 3,228 francs. The mission was buying over 6,000 kilos of local tobacco at five francs per kilo in 1931; the forty-seven workers produced 640,000 cigars worth 80,130 francs. Millers worked round the clock in five twelve-man shifts, producing flour at the mission sold for 2-5 francs a kilo. They bought in annually about 30,000 kilos of local wheat at 0.5-1.0 francs a kilo. Other profits were made from the carpentry shop which made furniture, and provided construction materials for the growing town of Kigali'.⁸⁴

In 1929, the government, appalled by workers' wage conditions, insisted on the introduction of a minimum wage below which no employers might go. Since missionaries paid their employees poor wages, they found the new measures embarrassing and called for a reduction in domestic staff.⁸⁵ Many catechists were obliged, in order to survive, to sell their labour to the mines and plantations while still working for the mission.⁸⁶ The dilemma for the Roman Catholic Church was how to talk about employee exploitation and present the distinctive character of the

⁸² Newbury, C., *op. cit.*, 1988, p.175.

⁸³ Linden, I., *op. cit.*, p.181

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Classe to confreres, 11 February 1929, CR

⁸⁶ Linden, I., *op. cit.*, p.203

Christian community, *koinonia*, whilst its own house was still in a questionable state. The attempts of the church to talk on behalf of employees were challenged by its own position as an employer and by the fact that other employers were colonial friends on whom the missionaries relied for the 'success' of their work of evangelism.

The burden became so heavy on the people as labour was requested by the White Fathers, the colonial authorities, the court and the chiefs⁸⁷ that the Resident, Kandt, had to intervene to regulate the situation. On one occasion he wrote to the chief of Gisaka ordering him not to demand services from people who were already working at the Christian missions. 'The house-servants, cooks, gardeners and those who are required to work at the mission-station, such as the masons, workers at the brickyard either making or firing the bricks, will no longer pay you anything; they will not give you any more materials as they have done up to now, and they will not carry out any more work for you'. In addition the chiefs would be able to choose only men who were not picked to work at the mission; the missionaries being given the priority in procuring necessary labour.⁸⁸ This demonstrates the relations of competition that existed between the chiefs, the missionaries and the patrons, the *shebuja*.

In addition Christian missionaries found themselves in the competition for tax. Part of Church income came in the form of contributions such as free will offerings, donations and tithe. Freewill offering was collected every Sunday during the worship service. Those who attended the service were expected to give a certain amount towards the work of God. There was no minimum nor maximum but each of the worshippers (including children) were expected to give.

Money was also collected in the form of tithe, the tenth of the income of each individual member (mostly adults) of the congregation, exception in the Roman Catholic Church. This practice was built on the biblical imperative (Malachi 3:8) and in some denominations it was followed literally.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Reyntjes, F., *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda. Droit public et évolution politique, 1916-1973*, Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique centrale, (Annales, Serie in-800, Sciences humaines, 117), 1985, p.104

⁸⁸ Johansen, E., *Impulsion donnée et expérience acquise au cours de quarante années de service missionnaire –volume deux: Le deuxième champ de travail: Rwanda 1907-1917*, ined.p.48

⁸⁹ Although it is the Seventh Day Adventists who are best known for the emphasis they put on their members' participation through *ugusaruza* which is the practice of collecting money from both members and non-members, other Protestant denominations do the same, and also the Roman Catholic but to a less degree.

There were also occasional contributions requested for particular activities, as when the congregation planned a special activity to be carried out during a specified length of time, such as the building of a new church, the renovation or refurbishment of the existing one, the purchase of a drum, the purchase of benches for the church etc. Other sources of funds could include Church property and assets, and foreign aid.

Collecting these revenues was never easy for the Rwandan Church as a whole, and for small churches in particular. Whilst both the colonial administration and the royal administration were levying taxes, the Church found itself needing offerings and contributions from the very same population. For instance in 1929 the Roman Catholic bishop Classe pressed for a Church tax, one franc per adult Christian, but the results were disappointing;⁹⁰ sending out the *bakuru* (church-elders) caused too much trouble, and the Fathers themselves took to 'harvesting' the tax on their motor-bikes. The seminaries at Kabgayi were a constant drain on resources, and baskets used to be placed outside the churches for offerings for their upkeep in kind or money.⁹¹ When government officials started to inflate demographic figures in order to request more tax, the missionaries intervened as this was weakening both the population and their own ability to raise the contributions. In a report deploring the harsh exaction being levied on the population, missionaries at the Catholic mission of Nyamasheke noted that although official figures put the number of taxpayers at about 6000, the number actually present in the chiefdom during 1942 was only 3050. In that year, a total of 1520 men were employed on a daily (non-contract) basis. This figure constituted nearly 50 per cent of the actual adult population of the chiefdom at the time, although according to official population figures, it would have amounted to only about 25 per cent.⁹²

There were also problems with decision-making mechanisms in different churches. Like the colonial administration, the Church decision-making process did not involve the members. Few church activities were undertaken after appropriate consideration by committees and meetings appointed by the congregation. The missionary and later on the priest could use his discretion to suggest an item as a project needed by the congregation. The members were expected to do as they were told. Although some

⁹⁰ Classe to confreres, 14 June 1929, 14 January 1932, CR.

⁹¹ Linden, I., *op. cit.*, p.196. See also Kabgayi diary, 20 August 1934, A thousand parishioners at Murunda gave 1,101 francs; see *Rapports annuels*, 1933-34, p. 408

⁹² Newbury, C., *op.cit.*, 1988, p.79

churches were strict about the methods of raising funds⁹³, it could be argued that the way the Rwandan churches financed themselves did not greatly differ from the ways the state used to get its revenues. The question that must be asked is whether the church, by adopting this economic system, contributed to the development of mechanisms through which ordinary Rwandans became alienated and felt socially and economically excluded.

On the whole, Christian missionaries grew used to the system and even when they dared intervene, they did so on behalf of a small proportion of those who attended their specific denominations instead of challenging the whole economic structure.⁹⁴ Incidents in which Christian missionaries would come out and speak about the exploitation and hardship Rwandans were living in without referring to an individual's religious allegiance were rare.⁹⁵ the general tendency being that each Christian denomination protected its own members. As far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned, Linden, talking about the situation in the early 1940s, describes situations such as: "Monsignor Classe was now ageing rapidly after forty years on the missions, and thoughts of reform and protest were far from his mind. Despite ruthless Belgian tightening of the screw, he limited his complaints to a protest that forced labour was making it impossible for people to attend catechism classes. With failing strength he worked diligently from 1937 to 1943 to gain privileges for Catholics, arranging exemptions from tax for Catholic pupils regularly at school, and from *akazi* and *uburetwa* for catechists."⁹⁶ Despite numerous calls from a local Catholic chief pleading with the missionaries to intercede on behalf of his subjects

⁹³ For instance the Free Methodists maintained that the church could not in any way be used as a marketing agency for the commercial products of its constituents. But they supported community-wide efforts to raise funds for worthwhile projects so long as the fund-raising effort was not a hidden way to increase revenues in the Church and was consistent with Christian ethics.

⁹⁴ This seems to have been a very complicated situation in which it was not easy for missionaries to act. Father Lupias was strongly criticised by both the king and the colonial authority when he tried to intervene on behalf of one member of his congregation. He was charged with proselytizing rather than giving genuine assistance.

⁹⁵ For instance, according to the Nyundo diary; 14 February 1944, Father Pages wrote a letter of protest to the Gisenyi Resident about the brutal corporal punishment meted out to those who, in desperation, pulled up their potato crop before it was ready. In this letter Father Pages did not refer to any religious affiliation of those affected by the punishment. Also when the plight of Rwandans was reaching its peak in 1943, the Protestant Alliance were the first to send a list of complaints to Leopoldville where the Belgian administration authority resided. They described the situation as "a steady deterioration in the morale of the country" (see memorandum of Protestant Alliance, 24 April 1944.). 1943 was the time when the Rwandan population was drained and weakened by three years of war, and then succumbed to an appalling famine that cost the lives of at least 300,000 people. There was no let-up in the demands for forced labour, and by the end there was a general discontent among the population (See Linden, I., *op.cit.*, p.206).

⁹⁶ Rubbens to Classe, 31 July 1937; Classe to Rubbens, 2 August 1937; Simon to Classe, 19 January 1940 .

and address what was causing his subjects to flee into other regions to escape the whip and forced labour, the White Fathers procrastinated before making their protest officially known to the colonial administration.⁹⁷

For some observers, the multiplicity of church buildings and the quality of these buildings (in comparison with their surroundings) are further signs of the exploitation of the natives by the Church. Braeckman noted: 'Even now, perched at top of the hills, the large mission stations built with red bricks, churches as huge as cathedrals testify to the implantation of Roman Catholicism in the country. They testify also to the amount of labour requested from local populations, not without resistance, because in the beginning the 'hill-chiefs' had opposed the missionaries who, with the help of the king and of their guns brought the peasants under their control'. The period that followed was relatively easy as the missionaries, applying the same colonial policy of indirect rule, proceeded to buy the hill-chiefs with the tradable goods (clothes, jewellery) of which they held a quasi monopoly, and then these 'hill-chiefs' turned against the peasants and made them work for the missionaries. Missionaries had acquired the monopoly on wood that subjects had to fetch from further and further away in the forest. Subjects were also involved in transportation, building and brick making. Although missionaries recognized that a system that was imposed on the people was disastrous for their mission even if they implemented it through the king and his chiefs, they did not manage to do away with it. Their problem was that without that system the construction of their churches would have been impossible.⁹⁸

4.5. Conclusion

Taxation has its roots in the idea that the powerful who had conquered a land and its people should get something for that victory. Examples have been taken from the Israelites and their surroundings and from Rwanda history. The peoples who lost wars had to pay tribute as a punishment and as sign of recognition of the victorious authority. This authority did not need to account for what it did with the money, and tribute evasion was met with repression and fines. In the case of Rwanda, tributes co-existed with the current system of taxation. But the idea that taxation should benefit the powerful survived and was carried over to colonial and post-colonial Rwanda.

⁹⁷ Linden, I., *op. cit.* P.208

⁹⁸ Au coeur de l'ethnie. *Ethnies, tribalisme et Etat en Afrique*, sous la direction de Jean-Loup Anselme et Elikia M'Bokolo, Paris, La Decouverte, 1985, p. 17.

With this development the importance of questioning the taxation system becomes more relevant as an issue of economic exclusion. The methods of tax collection, its purpose and use as well as the capability of the people to pay should be challenged by the nature of the Christian community. In fact social justice cannot be said to have been satisfied so long as working men are denied a wage that will enable them to secure proper sustenance for themselves and for their families; so long as they are denied the opportunity of acquiring a modest means of living and avoiding misery and poverty.⁹⁹ The fact that Jesus and Paul did emphasise the accountability of individual citizens to the state did not mean that the state and church institutions should not be accountable in the way they collect and use tax and offering. Both Jesus and Paul were dealing with specific contexts in which the emphasis needed to be put on the obedience to the authority.

The question that remains for the Rwandan Christians to answer is this: How can the concept of *koinonia* become a reality when its members have been and are still oppressed and overburdened in order to feed their brethren in higher social classes? A Church that is divided into an overtaxed class that sweats only for the feeding and up-keep of another class that lives in idleness, fails in its mission to be a partnership with God and with God's people.

It must be admitted that the authority of the church itself, as a messenger of Jesus Christ, is in question when the facts prove that a man is treated by his fellow man in a manner which contradicts his true vocation. If the Church is silent, for example, when some strata of the population is kept malnourished, when some hearts are stupefied by criminal teachings, when public offerings, the property of all, are left at the disposal of powerful corrupt officials, the Church purely and simply betrays its work. It betrays because it permits without opposition a man to be removed from those basic necessities of material and moral life without which he is no longer a man; without which in consequence he can no longer respond to the call of Christ to him. Preaching the Gospel in these circumstances is a mockery and a lie.¹⁰⁰

It is not in the habit of Rwandan Christians to discuss economic issues and challenge the way the government sets its policy. But how for instance could a church that compelled people who were operating in a non-monetary system to pay in currency putting them in an impossible situation, preach God's love to the poor without

⁹⁹ Davies, H.S.J., *op.cit.*, p.130

¹⁰⁰ Leenhardt, *op. cit.*, 1972, p.107. tr. P. Nz.

destroying its own integrity? Thus the Church in Rwanda failed its own overburdened members, failed the community in general, and failed the principle of *koinonia* which it exists to exemplify.

CHAPTER FIVE:

EXCLUSION BY AND FROM EDUCATION

5.1. Introduction

So far we have attempted a theological dialogue with aspects of the socio-economic life of Rwandans in relation to land, cattle, monetarism and taxation. It has been shown that the Rwandan Christian community lived short of the ideal of Christian *koinonia*. From other aspects too the Rwandan Christian community should be scrutinised, among them the opportunities and challenges presented by education.

The issue was the way education was distributed as well as its purpose and content. If the purpose of education is to furnish men and women who will be able to affect the political, intellectual and spiritual regeneration of society,¹ the development of all human potentialities individually and socially², then it is appropriate to investigate whether this purpose was being achieved.

This chapter starts with the theological affirmation that education is a God given opportunity to enrich the community and not for the enhancement of life of a few individuals. The family, the Church and the state have an obligation to discharge this duty with fairness and justice. This chapter shows to what extent Rwandan education became a fertile ground in which the Rwandan elite sowed seeds of regional, ethnic, religious and gender discrimination, discontent and exclusion. This promoted and increased fear, mistrust, bigotry and hatred among Rwandans. Claudine Vidal summed up the situation: "The Rwandan civil wars demonstrate in an exemplary way the cultural dimension of ethnic politics. The most determined and violent adversaries come from the ranks of the better educated in the population who are more capable of exploiting their knowledge to increase their wealth and obtain the new jobs".³ That education was grounded in an exclusive policy which went against God's plan to care and look after each member of the community.

The argument contained in this chapter is that every effort must be undertaken in order to show fairness and justice in the way educational opportunities are distributed and that the content of education must not incite to exclusion, division and hatred. If

¹ Cameron, M. R., *Methodism and Society in Historical Perspective*, Volume I, New York: Abingdon Press, 1961, p.232

² Tillich, P., *Theology of Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 146

³ Vidal, C., *Sociologie des passions*, Paris: Karthala, 1991, p.43

it is used towards these evil ends, even if people are highly qualified, education will eventually destroy the community instead of building it. The case of Rwanda highlights to what extent education can serve as an incubator in which different sorts of exclusion can develop and demonstrates that the content of education sometimes sustains the ideology of exclusion.

5. 2. Education as a divine imperative for the community

According to the Catholic teaching, education is essentially a social and not simply an individual activity.⁴ In Tillich's terms, education should be geared towards good citizenship, the only approach able to combine the induction of pupils into the spirit of the nation and its institutions, training in general and special skills and mediation of the cultural goods of past and present.⁵

Education has to be discharged by the family, the civil society and the church. All these three institutions have to bear in mind that their existence comes from God and that they always depend on him. The family is a micro-community, a unit created by God and called to be the way by which humanity reproduces and perpetuates itself. The Church as the body of Christ, the assembly of God's people, has the duty educate the community. The state, as the Apostle emphasised, was given by God to maintain order and pursue the 'common good'. The three institutions share responsibility in education. Therefore the Christian community cannot withdraw from this responsibility, and has the duty to encourage people into education and emphasise that youths and their parents must understand that the goal of education for them is not to enhance their own personal position but for the community.

education which is concerned with man as whole, individually and socially, in the order of nature and in the order of grace, necessarily belongs to all these three societies, in due proportion, corresponding, according to the disposition of Divine Providence, to the co-ordination of their respective ends.⁶

The fact that the three institutions have to share the responsibility of educating the members of the community, shows the kind of unity and fellowship that should exist among them. God calls them to the same task that is to be done with and for the

⁴ Encyclical, *The Christian Education of Youth*, Dec. 31, 1991

⁵ Tillich, P., *op.cit.*, 1959, p.149

⁶ Encyclical, *The Christian Education of Youth*, Dec. 31, 1991

subject. For Pope Pius XI, the family, the church and the state must unite in the discharge of this responsibility. He said that since education owed its existence to the initiative of the family and of the Church, long before it was undertaken by the state, the latter must not be in opposition to those other two institutions, but has to form with them a perfect moral union. This moral union means that for happiness to be achieved in the community literary, social, domestic and religious education must go hand in hand.⁷

They have to make sure that the aim of education is to serve the good of the community through the formation of free individuals capable of interacting positively with their environment. Such a task is a continuation and development of the potentialities that God has given each human being. Boutroux noted that the task of education is “to act on mind and conscience in such a way as to render them capable of thinking and judging, of themselves; to determine, initiate, arouse spontaneity, and fashion human beings into freedom”⁸. Neither the Church nor the state can escape from their responsibility to members of the community. This responsibility is part of their *raison d’être*. God has given the three institutions enough resources to carry out this responsibility. Therefore they should encourage people not to be concerned only with producing an intellectual élite but with making education in all its forms an enrichment of the community.

If society has been established in this function of education, if a man receives from other men and ultimately from society his moral nourishment, he cannot love his neighbour without doing everything he can to see that society fulfils its function for the good of all. Christians have to realise that interdependence works for good, and that God offers them immense resources for the preparation of their hearts for the truths which he fully reveals to them in Jesus Christ.⁹

There is thus an inescapable imperative to combine their efforts and energies so that they do not undermine each other’s achievement. In the process of educating the community, the family, the Church and the state have to determine that the environment, the content and the way education opportunities are distributed to members of the community, all lead to the well-being of the community, not to its disintegration.

⁷ Davies, H.S.J., *op.cit.*, p.101

⁸ Boutroux, E., *Education and Ethics*, London: Williams & Norgate, 1913, p.x

⁹ Leenhardt, F.J., *op. cit.*, p.95

5.3. Education as an Ideological Tool for Exclusion

Education being defined as the process through which individuals within a community acquire knowledge and information which gradually allow them to participate in the life of their community¹⁰, the environment in which education is carried out has to be healthy and inspiring of good and positive ideas for the community. For Flude and Ahier, it is important that the family, the school, church, the culture reflect the social dimension which is fundamental to the divine purpose of education. It has to be a winning and convenient environment, where children can experience the joy of learning, where they can see justice and goodwill all around, where they can work and play in common, while they are linked to one another by the precious bonds of good-fellowship. Teachers' and administrators' level of socialization, their ability to interact and dialogue with pupils, all this constitutes the institutional context with which pupils' careers are formed.¹¹ It has to be a place where the children enjoy their childhood, where they manifest the qualities of their age and delight in the pure joys that nature and God offer to each of them.¹² The talk with school-mates, conversation at home, radio and newspapers, all should contribute to the making of a safe environment that encourages every child to be a good member of that created community of God's people.

Secondly, the content of education is important because it can be used for good or for ill.

One has seen that the soul of a generation can be entirely closed, by systematic training to certain elementary truths. It has become evident that you can give people the kind of conscience you want them to have, if you put a price on it; you can suggest ideas about their duty completely opposed to those approved by Christian conscience. You can make them deaf to basic moral truths, completely resistant to certain convictions. You can inculcate vicious convictions, sadistic attitudes, deceitful 'verities'. In a word, you can produce an immoral morality. Hearts can be formed and deformed, they can be directed or confused.¹³

As also happened in Nazi Germany, Rwandan education was used to promote all kinds of discrimination and exclusion. Nazi education is one of the examples which

¹⁰ Freire, P., & Shor, I., *A Pedagogy for Liberation-Dialogue on Transforming Education*, London: MacMillan, 1987, p.13

¹¹ Flude, M. & Ahier, J., (ed.) *Educability, Schools and Ideology*, London: Croom Helm, 1974, p.45

¹² Boutroux, E., *op.cit.*, .231

¹³ Leenhardt, F.J., *op.cit.*, p.89 (tr. P.Nz.)

illustrates this point. Young folk were educated into Nazi ideology in school and to some extent at home.¹⁴ As Troyina and Williams noted, this kind of education served as an ideological tool that reproduced and legitimated and institutionalised inequalities, discrimination and exclusion.¹⁵ Institutional racism or ethnic discrimination is only one of the kinds of exclusion that can develop. The institutionalisation of ethnic discrimination is used here to mean 'the predication of decisions and politics on considerations of ethnicity for the purpose of subordinating an ethnic group and maintaining control over that group'.¹⁶ It refers to individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, as well as to public discourses, policies and organizational structures.¹⁷ For Paulo Freire, the dominant ideology lives inside us and controls society outside. And when this domination inside and outside is complete, definitive, people cannot think of social transformation; and thus education is denied its creative dimension which is necessary for the community that needs to reinvent and recreate itself.¹⁸

Freire is also critical of any methodology which does not equip pupils for the participation in the life of their community. He uses words such as 'massification', 'domestication', 'dehumanising' for the kind of education that takes pupils as empty boxes that need to be filled with facts and theories, or 'sponges to be saturated with official information, or vacant bank accounts to be filled with deposits from the required syllabus'.¹⁹ This methodology assumes that knowledge is imprisoned in the brains of a few individuals who have the task of transferring it to others by what Freire calls 'banking method'.

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat... In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those

¹⁴ Ibid pp. 88/9

¹⁵ Troyna B. & Williams, J., *Racism, Education and the State*, London: Croom Helm, 1986, p.6

¹⁶ Carmichael & Hamilton, *Black Power*, 1968, p.3. They distinguished between overt and individualized racism, on the one hand, and covert and institutional racism, on the other. Individualized racism, they suggested, resided in the explicit actions of the individual, while institutional racism referred to those actions and inactions which maintain people in a disadvantaged position and which rely on the active and pervasive ideologies and practices.

¹⁷ Troyina, B., *Racism and Education – Research Perspectives*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993, p.9

¹⁸ Freire, P. & Shor I., *op. cit.*, 1987, p.13

¹⁹ McLaren, P. & Leonard, P., *Paulo Freire – A critical encounter*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.26. See also Freire, P., *Education as the Practice of freedom*, London: Hazell Watson & Viney, 1974, pp.33/4

who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing... The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result in their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.²⁰

This kind of education accustoms children to depend upon other people for their standards and to 'do as they are told'. It leads to a blind acceptance of what leaders say and to a belief that people are powerless to solve problems or change society. Hence the apathy and feeling of powerlessness among most people even in democratic institutions.²¹

Therefore a distinction should be made between 'a bad education' which can destroy communities and fellowships; and 'a good education' which builds, furthers and enhance God's creation. The church has to help the community in which it carries out its mission to have and maintain a good education that promotes justice, develops orderly thinking, emotions and ideals; that gives the community the criteria against which to appreciate philosophical, economical and political doctrines. Education should be able to help members of the community to develop their personalities, talents and capacities; it should bring the best out of them and help them to grow tolerant, happy and loving.²² It is by relating the Gospel and the spiritual activities to the moral and social dimension of the life of the community that Christians accomplish their task towards their brothers and sisters of the community.

The church must help the community to think, feel and see rightly: it has to help it to put its ideas, feelings and ideals into perspective; give it standards with which to judge philosophies and economic and political doctrines. By seasoning with the salt of the Gospel all those activities of the mind which demonstrate the moral aspect of society's life, Christians fulfil their task with regard to their brothers and sisters, members of this community. There is no doubt that love of one's neighbour imposes on Christians the desire to see such ideas shared by the greatest number, and such principles applied as often as possible.²³

Being excluded from education means being excluded from the sphere of decision -

²⁰ Freire, P., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum, 1970, pp.58,60

²¹ Augarde, T., 'Education' in *Peace is the way, A Guide to Pacifist Views and Actions* id. (ed. By Wright, C. & Augarde, T.) Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1990, p.87

²² Ibid., p.86

²³ Leenhardt, F.J., *op.cit.*, p.95.

making. As a result those excluded are manoeuvred through education and mass media to the point where they believe nothing they have not heard on the radio, seen on television, or read in the newspapers, or from the teacher. As it happened in Rwanda, they come to accept mythical explanations of their reality. Education should be geared towards social transformation which in such situations, are part of the creation and re-creation God wants humanity to pursue. Thus a divine call upon the Church to be vigilant at this noble action of educating the soul and the mind, and to learn what kind of ideology and influence is being exercised on the offspring of the community.

Thirdly, the aim of education is to be made clear from the start; it is for the sake community and not for individuals. For Durkheim, it is:

the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to ensure and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual, and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined.²⁴

However Education ought not to be aimed at personal enrichment, but rather to the good of the community. Harrison contends that 'it should be the central mechanism by which entire villages and urban communities learn to develop themselves, their productive potential, and their resources.'²⁵ In encouraging people into learning and education the Christian community should therefore make sure that youths and their parents understand that the goal of education for them is not to enhance their own personal position but for the community. In this sense, following Tillich's advice, school should be defined as a small laboratory in which the questions of Church and world can be studied and brought to a preliminary solution, a solution which could contribute to the solution of the larger problem.²⁶ Moses who learned the wisdom of the Egyptians (Act.7:22), Daniel who learned the tongues and traditions of the Chaldeans (Dan.1:3-5,17), and Paul, Gamaliel's best student (Act.26:24), are examples of how education can serve to further God's purpose.

Rwandan education contributed to the growing culture of exclusion and division in the Rwandan community. Its environment has been characterised by ethnic

²⁴ Durkheim, E., *Education and Sociology*, 1911, trans. 1956, Free Press, p.71

²⁵ Harrison, P., *The Third World Tomorrow*, London: Penguin, 1980, p.306

²⁶ Tillich, P., *op.cit.*, 1959, p.157

discrimination and economic exploitation, its aim and content blurred by selfishness and interests of the powerful, while its distribution was unequal and exclusive.

Formal education, as opposed to informal and traditional education, was introduced in Rwanda by both colonial powers and Christian missionaries at the start of this century.²⁷ Webster, talking about Third World countries in general, observed that education was sponsored by the ex-colonial powers keen to sustain their cultural influence in their colonies. As a result the system of schooling was essentially European, and heavily influenced by colonialism. It was seen as a vehicle for the assimilation of the colonised into European cultures. In the process the indigenous culture was discriminated against and weakened. Education aimed at the training of local people who could be used by the authorities to run the colonies. Unquestionable obedience was a virtue and colonial teachers made sure that education would not lead natives to question the superiority of the European.²⁸

The early school curriculum reflected this worry. It was restricted to the teaching of writing, reading and Swahili;²⁹ just enough to communicate with the colonial masters. Exception was made in some mission schools where additional subjects like religion, brick making, woodwork, construction, cultivation of foreign fruits, and sewing were taught³⁰. Missionaries only reluctantly added these subjects because they were concerned that economic development that these extra subjects would bring to Rwandan Christians into unrestrained competition for wealth and the risk that school leavers would neglect manual work. Thus they kept in their mind the need to balance between theoretical and practical knowledge.

On the whole, both state and missionary education had the same concerns and pursued the same objectives of civilising the natives. In 1912, one missionary acknowledged this in these words: 'If I no longer had any schoolboys around me I would simply give up' acknowledging that the only civilisation which the missionaries would succeed in bringing to Ruanda would be through education'³¹.

²⁷ Erny, J.P.P., *De l'Education traditionnelle à l'enseignement moderne au Rwanda (1900-1975) – Un pays d'Afrique noire en recherche pédagogique*, Tome 1, Thèse présentée devant l'Université de Strasbourg II, le 3 Octobre 1978. Service de reproduction des thèses: Université de Lille II – 1981

²⁸ Webster, A., *Introduction to the Sociology of Development* (2nd ed.), London: MacMillan Press, 1990, p.123

²⁹ Mbonimana, G. & Ntezimana, E. *op. cit.*, p.133

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143

³¹ Roger, L., *op.cit.*, p.187

However there were conflicts of interest when it came to specific issues. The colonial administration wanted obedient civil servants who would carry out to order their plans and political objectives. So it opened a school in Nyanza for the sons of the chiefs, and another public school in Kigali to prepare those who would carry out clerical duties. These schools were exclusive and ordinary Rwandans were not encouraged or not allowed to send their children. The Rwandan saying '*uriga se ngo uzategeke umusozi*' meaning 'why bother going to school if one will not get a hill to rule over' reflects the prevailing mentality that only the sons of the chiefs had reason to be educated since they were to take over from their fathers.

Christian missionaries on the other hand had an additional objective to education. They viewed it as a way to get more people into the Church and maintained that religious and secular education should be go hand in hand. For both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries the school was seen as an essential preparation for the implantation of the gospel among the population and the instruction of future Christians. Missionaries wanted to keep the Bible high on the curriculum of the schools.³²

Being Protestant or Roman Catholic could also determine whether one should go to school or not, and the quality of education one would get. It started as 'proselytism' but later became religious discrimination. Protestant missionaries engaged in a kind of competition with the White Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church to get access to the court where the king and other notables lived. Education was one of the instruments they tried. Although they were both resented the Protestants appeared to have made some progress in their attempts to teach the king how to read and write. By 1911, king Musinga could read and speak fluent Swahili; although the difficulties of his hand-writing obliged him to order a typewriter through the Resident.³³ But the work of the Protestant missionaries was suspended by the defeat of the German troops in Rwanda and their station was temporarily abandoned.

Proselytism through education was seen also in the conflicts between the Roman Catholic missionaries and the missionaries of Church Missionary Society in the late 1920s. Within Rwanda the Anglican missionaries were seen as the forerunners entrusted with facilitating British penetration. The Roman Catholic hierarchy

³² Kalibwami, J., *Le Catholicisme et la société rwandaise, 1900-1962*, Paris: Presence Africaine, 1991, p.237

³³ Mbonimana & Ntezimana, *op.cit.*, p.133

combined their efforts with the colonial masters to prevent Anglican missionaries' easy access to the population. It was with this purpose that Bishop Classe suggested that the colonial administration give him the means to confront the situation from the educational and religious perspective; and requested the Resident to be vigilant from the political side. This strategy was echoed by the letter Bishop Classe wrote to Kervyn of the Ministry of Colonies:

Education is of paramount importance given the imminent and abrupt development of this country much envied by our neighbours of the North. I have just arrived from a trip in Uganda, at Villa-Maria, Rubaga, Kampala, Entebe. The Anglican Mission of Uganda was seeking to catch up with the lost opportunities when the East of Rwanda was handed over to Belgium. We are far ahead of them and not only have we to keep ourselves ahead but also to develop both our services and those of the Government.... The English look at Ruanda-Urundi and appear to be regretting its hand-over. This is the reason why we should be working very hard and keeping on at it.³⁴

The Anglican missionaries then working in Rwanda had a difficult time as they were thought to be working for a new partitioning of the country. The dismissive attitude taken jointly by the colonial administration and the Roman Catholic Church towards the Anglican missionaries was to be extended to all other Protestant missionaries, who were often referred to as second class Christians³⁵. In addition the kind of education they offered was disregarded by both the colonial administration and Roman Catholic missionaries. One Roman Catholic colonial officer confided to Bishop Classe:

Both as a catholic and a colonial I cannot see any value in Protestant education... it ignores the special character of our primitive races and hands out a spiritual food which revolutionizes their way of thinking, creates anarchy... and gives rise to extreme individualism, which tends of necessity to damage the precious gregarious spirit of our blacks that alone can realize and maintain that latent voluntary and collective submission which is indispensable to all civilizing work.³⁶

This hostile attitude greatly undermined the quality of Protestant education available and reduced the number of those who could benefit from it. For instance until the

³⁴ Rumiya J., *op.cit.*, p.212. tr. P. Nz. See also Classe to Kervyn, 12 February 1929, Classement M (634), M.I.V., A.A., Brussels

³⁵ Taylor, C.C., *op.cit.*, p.55

³⁶ Kupens to Classe, 20 June 1925.

early 1970s, there were few cases of Protestant pupils attending classes with Roman Catholics. Children developed from an early age a sense of religious exclusion which was reflected in education and later in the level of employment.

The colonial authorities detected the danger of education being exclusive; but found it difficult to convince the missionaries to keep secular and religious education separate. The German administration thought that it was possible to influence the pupils indirectly. Grawert (the German governor) confessed: "I freely admit that I believe that at first, attempts at religious instruction and attempts at conversion must be dropped; but I also think that by wisely using his influence the teacher who gains is the one who knows how to enthrall his students; in this way a school prepares the way for Christianity without religious instruction". Furthermore, the German administration feared that education was going to be flawed should missionaries continue to use it as a tool to proselytise, and that education was going to serve only one section of society.³⁷ Both the natives and the colonial administration remained worried about the missionaries' practice of using education for proselytising. A Colonial administrator observed: "The natives, when they do not intend to become Christians, approach with a certain mistrust, for in spite of the existing good will, the missionaries cannot free themselves from the habit of injecting religious material into the instruction"³⁸.

In fact both the missionary and colonial education policies contained elements of social exclusion. The Belgian colonial administration followed a policy of 'instruct the masses and separate the elite' (*instruire la masse et dégager l'élite*) in which the élite was admitted to positions of privilege and a line drawn between them and the masses.³⁹ Both Kagame⁴⁰ and Vidal⁴¹ referred to this élite as the 'fourth ethnic group' (*la quatrième ethnique*).⁴² For missionary policy, on the other hand, education was a tool through which the Rwandan population, the youth in particular had to be brought through the doors of their churches. While missionary and colonial education policies allowed ethnic discrimination to take place, missionary education

³⁷ Roger, L., *op. cit.* p.184

³⁸ Kalibwami, J., *op.cit.*, p.222

³⁹ Erny, P., *op. cit.*, p.xviii. See also Kalibwami, J., *op.cit.*, p.239

⁴⁰ Kagame, A., 'Le pluralisme ethnique et culturel dans le Rwanda-Urundi' in *Ethnic and cultural pluralism in intertropical communities*, Bruxelles: Institut international des Civilisations Différentes, 1957, pp.268-293.

⁴¹ Vidal, C., *op.cit.*, 1991, p.28

⁴² Linden, *op.cit.*, pp.221-241

bears additional blame for unwittingly developing religious discrimination by using education as an instrument for conversion.

The divide-and-rule policy which inspired Rwandan education stressed ethnic differences, particularly differences between Hutus and Tutsis since pupils were not registered in school as Rwandans but as either Hutus or Tutsis. The carrying of Identity Cards served this purpose of ethnic differentiation. The myth of origin and the hamite myth sustained this differentiation. The 1959 social revolution, which was only the counter-offensive to the regime that had exploited the Rwandans, reversed the situation without challenging the principle of ethnic identity and ethnic inequalities. Large numbers of Hutus were then admitted into schools while the number of Tutsis was cut down. This was how two politico-military élites found themselves in a struggle, competing and even fighting for education and other resources.

There was another side to this struggle. Before long, colonial education had already produced a group of élite disconnected from their realities, their cultures, their people and uprooted from their community. As also occurred in other colonies, the knowledge that would have helped the African to be an active member of his/her local community was absent and irrelevant in the eyes of planners of education.⁴³ Terms like 'Afro-Saxons' or 'White-blackmen'⁴⁴ used to refer to the African elite that had lost touch with their culture and whose knowledge was of little relevance to the local community. It was not surprising that the young generation of élite, being far separated from the mass and in fact frightened by them, resolved to use their education to domesticate the very people they should have been serving. In fact, Bishop Classe, acknowledged that it was going to be difficult to please the newly formed social class of élite or *évolués* who like bright but difficult children needed special treatment.⁴⁵

In order to maintain the legitimacy of their power this élite trained their people into blind obedience, obliging them to surrender their sense of self through submission to the decisions made by others. The damage that was done to Rwandans through this kind of education was to be discovered years later when many Rwandans succumbed

⁴³ Daniel, J., quoted in Webster, A., *op.cit.*, p.124

⁴⁴ Webster, A., *op.cit.*, p.124

⁴⁵ Linden, *op.cit.*, p.221

to the ideology of ethnic cleansing which served only the interest of the ruling élite that planned it.

By pursuing this education strategy both Hutu and Tutsi ruling élites⁴⁶, at different stages, erected and kept boundaries around themselves, thus not only isolating others but most importantly isolating themselves. A sense of group consciousness and ethnic identity developed. The privileged group built a 'hard boundary'⁴⁷ around their group which was not easy to cross from the side of the disadvantaged group. As Banton observed, the group that has a hard boundary presents

an exclusive front to others. It shuts itself off. If no one else wants to join the group, perhaps because it does not control any valued resources, then its exclusiveness will have few consequences for outsiders. Yet if a group is in a privileged position the nature of the boundary has important consequences for non members. If, seeking to defend their privileges, the group members deny entry to would-be recruits, then they are likely to develop images of themselves and of outsiders that will justify such policies. People who feel themselves excluded are likely to fight back, organizing to pursue their objectives, and developing an image of themselves which counterbalances the implication that they are unworthy of belonging to the privileged group.⁴⁸

During the colonial period, the Tutsi ruling class drew a 'hard boundary' round their group which excluded Hutus and ordinary Tutsis from education and high position. When Hutus knocked at the doors, the answer was: 'we are different', 'born different' and sharing is not possible. In May 1958, a group of Tutsis present at the 'Conseil Supérieur du Pays' wrote:

... the relations between us (Tutsis) and them (Hutus) have always been based on clientship; there is thus between us and them no grounds for a brotherly relationship... Because our kings conquered

⁴⁶ Linden noted that towards the 1950s the Rwandan elite could be divided into two: the élite (Tutsi) and the counter-élite (Hutu), See (Linden, *op.cit.*, pp.220-240

⁴⁷ Banton, *op.cit.*, 1981, p.125. Banton distinguishes soft boundaries from hard boundaries. A hard boundary is one that is difficult to cross; whilst with the soft boundary, outsiders are fairly readily admitted to membership and the group extends its influence by absorbing other peoples round it. Groups that are hard to join are often hard to leave. The significance of race is that it can be used to draw a very hard boundary and it is usually difficult for a person of inappropriate characteristics either to join or leave a racial category. The greater the privileges of membership, the more incentive there will be for people to seek to join. But there can be inclusive as well as exclusive boundaries.

⁴⁸ Banton, M., *op.cit.*, p.125

the lands of the Hutus, how can it be now that they pretend to be our brothers'.⁴⁹

During the post-colonial period the Hutu ruling class drew a boundary which excluded Tutsis in a kind of tit-for-tat strategy. When Tutsis knocked at the door, the familiar answer came out: 'we are different', 'born different' and no fellowship or sharing is possible at this level. But this time new groups emerged: northern people drew a boundary that excluded centre-southerners, men had already entrenched in tradition a boundary that excluded women, and Roman Catholics drew boundaries that excluded Protestants. Such was the sheer scale and variety of those Rwandan Christians affected by exclusion in education.

5.4. Distribution of education opportunities

When education is defined as the process of empowering individual members of communities without reference to what the community expects from them, it becomes power, and those who have it are differentiated from the rest who do not possess it and who have second class position in the community. As Harrison rightly observed the lack of it is 'a personal tragedy, and a wonderful force in preserving inequality and oppressions'.⁵⁰ These inequalities and oppressions are reflected in the kind of relationships members of the community develop among themselves, since being deprived of education sometimes means getting into a situation of weakness and eventually exclusion.

The division of Rwandans into competing ethnic groups and the existence of too many children to educate with few facilities, presented education authorities with a big challenge. Post-independence governments thought that it was important to distribute the few places available in such a way that all regions (northern and centre-southern), all church denominations (Roman Catholics and Protestants), all ethnic groups (Hutus, Tutsis and Twa) and both girls and boys would be fairly served.

The politics of equilibrium can be summarised as follows: for each according to his/her birthplace and his/her ethnic group. Within each ethnic group and each region, education and promotion according to proportions that take account of the composition of each ethnic group

⁴⁹ *Dialogue* no.208 of January-February 1999, p.132. tran. Nz. See also Gatwa, T. *op.cit.*, p.37

⁵⁰ Harrison, P., *op.cit.*, p.303

in the total of the population and the importance of each region, the importance determined by the decision maker himself.⁵¹

As this criticism suggests, this distribution strategy became just a formula behind which decision-makers served their friends and families blocking the chances for able children from poor families.

5.4.1. Ethnic Discrimination in Schools

During the early period of the missionary work, school recruitment was relatively easy for two reasons: Rwandans had been reluctant to get closer to the White missionaries for the fear that they would harm them. Tutsi chiefs and nobles did not allow their children to attend school or Church,⁵² since on the first contacts with the missionaries and the court, King Musinga had forbidden Tutsi nobles either to get into contact with missionaries or to let them go to their schools.

Therefore as most of the early converts to Christianity were from low classes and subsequently the first beneficiaries of missionary education, were from the lower social classes. But both the German administration and the Christian missionaries quickly saw danger in the fact that the Tutsi ruling class had already resisted education. Most of the early correspondence between the German administration and the Roman Catholic missionaries mirrored the authority's anxiety about how the 'impact of knowledge' would reach the Tutsi who had remained so far aloof from Europeans and European culture.

Pressure was intense on the king to allow children from the aristocracy get into education. It is believed that King Musinga was demoted for his resistance towards the Roman Catholic White Fathers. He was replaced by his son Rudahigwa, who was a practising Christian. It was during this period that the Tutsi ruling class took an interest in missionary schools.⁵³ After the Tutsi nobles responded to the call of the missionaries to have their children schooled, both the White Fathers and colonial authorities turned their back on children from lower families. Although attempts were made to recruit children from poor families and lower social classes, those who

⁵¹ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos & Vredeseilanden, *op.cit.*, p.45. On the real victims of ethnic equilibrium in schools, see also Willame, J.C., *op.cit.*, p.86

⁵² Mbonimana, G. & Ntezimana, E., *op. cit.*, p. 140

⁵³ Braeckman, C. *op. cit.*, p. 33

went to the earlier colonial and missionary schools were usually recruited from the wealthier families: the sons of chiefs.⁵⁴

The introduction of Identity Cards by the Belgian administration to Rwanda in the 1930s increased the feeling of loyalty to people's own ethnic group. In accepting the colonial classification of Hutus, Tutsis and Twas, it was as if Rwandans had admitted that it was in their genes, part of their very person. This was of great concern particularly when ethnic identification meant accessibility or inaccessibility to school and employment. As Banton noted, while members of the privileged group tended to construct hard boundaries around themselves so that others could not penetrate them, individuals from the disadvantaged group sought mobility in order to join the privileged group.⁵⁵

In the meantime the changes in the ruling class' attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church had already had an impact on the number of those from the ruling class who wanted to attend school. The Roman Catholic Church had ceased to be a Hutu Church and became a Tutsi Church as the King and Tutsi nobles flooded into it.⁵⁶ Schools felt the change as the number of Tutsis increased dramatically. By this time Hutus had started to appreciate the value of schools. The thirst for education was felt everywhere with the competition for a place becoming fierce. In the period that followed the 1930s, discrimination against Hutus in education increased. The influence of the Roman Catholic Church over Rwandan society through education was being judged as pervasive in reinforcing the Tutsi-Hutu division, and Hutu children felt it. "It is true that there were Hutus in the Seminaries. But even there, they were subject to the dominant ideology which rationalises the supposed superiority of the Tutsis."⁵⁷ Records were being taken of how many Hutus and how many Tutsis were being admitted in schools. The table below shows ethnic distribution in the *Groupe Scolaire* of Astrida – Butare between 1932 and 1954.

⁵⁴ Erny, J.P., *op.cit.*, p.236

⁵⁵ Banton, M., *op.cit.*, p. 129

⁵⁶ Linden, I., *op. cit.* Pp.

⁵⁷ Braeckman, C., *op. cit.* p. 36

Table 5: Ethnic distribution in the Group Scolaire d'Astrida – Butare between 1932 and 1954

Years	Tutsi		Hutu	
	Rwanda	Burundi	Rwanda	Burundi
1932	45		9*	
1933	21		--	
1934	26		13*	
1935**	41		11*	
1945	46		--	3
1946	44		1	8
1947	44		2	10
1948	85		2	11
1949 **	85		5	9
1953	68		3	16
1954	63		3	16

Key: * : country of origin not identified

** : figures not available for the period 1936-1944 and 1950-1952

Source: Taken from R. Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, London: Pall Mall Library of African Affairs, 1970, p.138

These records showed not only ethnic disparities, but also served to enforce the way pupils viewed themselves. Behind the figures there was the formation of two antagonistic and competing élites, in a mentality of ‘us and them’ which the Roman Catholic hierarchy sustained. Then in the mid-1950s the Hutu elite found an ally in the Roman Catholic church which had just received a new group of missionaries. The White Fathers of the early period, almost exclusively French, gave place to Flemish who felt close to the small oppressed, scorned and exploited peasants. According to Newbury, this new generation of missionaries transposed to Rwanda the battles being fought in Belgium by the Flemish movement against the French bourgeoisie. They identified with the humble peasants and swore to achieve social and economic changes by encouraging the petitions of the first Hutu élite, who organised themselves in the shadow of churches.⁵⁸ It was during this period that the number of Hutus in school began to rise steadily. The table below shows the ethnic distribution of school children towards the end of the decade.

⁵⁸ *Au coeur de l’Ethnie. Ethnies, tribalisme et Etat en Afrique*, sous la direction de Jean-Loup Anselme et Elikia M’Bokolo, Paris, La Decouverte, 1985, p.54

Table 6: ethnic distribution of school children by the year 1957 –1958

Ethnic group	% of the population	% of schooling in primary schools	% of schooling in secondary schools
Hutu	85	68.7	39.1
Tutsi	14	31.1	60.9
Twa	1	0.2	-
Total	100	100	100

Source: Mfizi Ch., *Les lignes de faite du Rwanda*. Office Rwandais de l'Information, Kigali, p.87

As can be seen on this table, the intake of Hutu pupils had substantially increased. However children from aristocratic families were still being admitted in great numbers in secondary schools, but also received excessive advantages and continued to enjoy far better treatment in comparison with their schoolmates. For instance the colonial administration offered free transportation to the children of the aristocracy in power, at the beginning and end of school terms.⁵⁹ At Kabgayi secondary school in 1952, Deo Kambanda noted that

...an other innovation was introduced. While the college was attended by pupils from well-off families, they were granted further advantages, less or no boarding fees, a bus was put at their disposal for their transport before and after holidays while paradoxically, pupils from poor families paid higher fees and had to walk long distances to and from their schools.⁶⁰

According to some analysts this practice was paving the way for future behaviour of revenge and counter-exclusion. And the Roman Catholic Missionary schools and Grand Séminaire served not only as a place where social discrimination took place but also as a place where students from lower social classes became acquainted with alternatives to the Rwandan system of exploitation. "In the seminaries, the Hutu students became more and more aware of the subservience of their people, the injustice of the land-owning system, of the heaviness of the constraints which weighed on the peasant. They were affected more and more by the arrogance of the Tutsis and dreamed of social revolution."⁶¹ Newbury noted that once graduated, these students constituted a powerful engine for change; and that schools provided opportunities for networking among different people from other parts of the country.

⁵⁹ Ministère des colonies, Rapport sur l'Administration belge du Rwanda – Urundi presente aux chambres, Bruxelles, 1952, p. 204

⁶⁰ This school was moved to Nyakibanda before it moved again to Bujumbura. See Kambanda, D., *op. cit.*, p. 68

⁶¹ Braeckman, C., *op. cit.* p.38

Once at work school leavers could build a relationship with their employers that the local chiefs could not control.⁶²

Both the colonial administration and the Roman Catholic hierarchy were right to think that change was more than overdue in the social relations of Rwandans. In fact the Tutsi ruling class, under pressure, had undertaken certain measures to reduce the hardship of poor people. But the social revolution the Hutu élite launched a few years before independence appears to have been equally unfocussed as has been the process of education itself. The democratisation of education undertaken by the *Movement Democratique Republicain* (the Hutu dominated political party that took power when Rwanda got its independence) existed only in theory. The post independence political leaders preached the policy of equitable sharing of places in school so that each ethnic group would get a quota proportional to its importance in the Rwandan population. But in reality access of Tutsis to schools, particularly to secondary schools and university, was restricted. Even the famous *equilibre ethnic* of the 1980s which aimed at a proportional ethnic intake into secondary schools and university was ethnically biased in its conception. It was conceived against the idea that Tutsis were being over-represented in school institutions. Avowedly the Habyarimana government restricted the places awarded in secondary schools to Tutsis to 14% their official proportion in the national population.⁶³ Elsewhere this quota is said to have been limited to only 10% of the places in the schools and universities.⁶⁴ As a consequence, many Tutsis were forced to go abroad for university education⁶⁵ or to change their identity cards to become Hutus. This policy also affected recruitment in both public and private service.

5.4.3. Regional competition for schools

Although political authorities and Christian missions maintained a network of schools, both primary and secondary, education developed unevenly throughout the country. The period between 1962-1973 saw a concentration of pupils in the centre (Gitarama) whilst educational establishments in the north (Gisenyi-Ruhengeri) dominated the period between 1973-1994. As result poor parents and those in remote

⁶² Newbury, C., *op. cit.* p. 182

⁶³ Gatera, M., *La Democratization de l'Enseignement Rwandais: Essai d'Interpretation et Analyse des Principaux Facteurs Caracteristiques de son Evolution*, These presentee a l'Universite Libre de Bruxelles, en vue de l'obtention du grade de Docteur en Sciences Politiques, 1996/97 p. 376

⁶⁴ Destexhe, A., *Rwanda: And Genocide in the Twentieth Centuries*: London: Pluto Press, 1995 p.44

⁶⁵ African Rights, *op. cit.* p.21

regions particularly from the South-west were discouraged by the very small number of their children who could go to secondary school. These parents found it difficult to send their children to the more numerous secondary schools of central Rwanda, partly because of government policy, partly because of the expenses involved⁶⁶. This even became one of the causes of the military coup of 1973 that toppled Kayibanda's government. But then it was the Northern turn to decide who was to be educated and where. Secondary school institutions increased noticeably after 1973 in the north and the number of pupils entering secondary schools increased even more. For example, students from Gisenyi (Habyarimana's birthplace) alone were awarded more than a third of all grants to study abroad in 1987-1988.⁶⁷ During the 1980s, not only did parents find it expensive to send their children to the mushrooming schools of the north, but also the few pupils who made their way there could not cope with the discrimination and arrogance directed towards them by northern classmates.

5.4.4. Gender discrimination

As in the Hebrew tradition, Rwandan women have been given second-class treatment. The place of women in Hebrew society is made brutally clear in the book of Sirach 25:24-25: "From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die. Allow no outlet to water, and no boldness of speech to an evil wife. If she does not go as you direct, separate her from yourself". Among the Jewish prayers was 'Blessed art thou O Lord who hast not made me a woman'.⁶⁸

Christianity also has held women to be the primary agents of the Fall and the continuing means through which its deadly consequences are transmitted. Genesis holds Eve responsible for taking the forbidden fruit. Paul was among those early Christians who spoke against women's equality with men, though at the same time assuring them of equality in Christ.

Rwandan tradition has a mystical account similar to the one in Genesis. This myth says that one day God, *Imaana*, wanted to kill Death. Death ran and *Imaana* ran after it. Death came across a woman who was ploughing her field and asked her to hide him. The woman resisted but eventually gave in and agreed to hide Death by swallowing him. When *Imaana* came he could not find Death. The myth concludes that if we die it is because the woman swallowed Death. Rwandan tradition goes

⁶⁶ Newbury, C., *op. cit.* p.226.

⁶⁷ African Rights, *op. cit.* , p.21

⁶⁸ *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, London: SCM Press, 1990, pp.497/8.

further than Paul's instruction to women not to speak in public. The saying: *Nta nkoko kazi isake ihari* translates 'a hen cannot shout in the presence of a cock'. This meant that a woman was not to speak when there was a man about; in ceremonies they were not to sit with men. Men would sit in the living room while women sat in another room further inside the house which for most of the time was dark.

Such mental attitudes translate into practice and have far-reaching consequences. They are at the root of women's being prevented from owning or inheriting land, and also one of the principal causes of girls not being sent to school.

Boys have always had priority in schooling because their future was in the public domain while girls were destined for private, domestic life. This is not of course particular to Rwanda. It was only a century ago that Napoleon I stated

I don't think we need to bother ourselves with a system of public instruction for girls; they cannot be better brought up than by their mothers; public education would not be any use to them because they are not called to live in public. Manners are what they need, and marriage is what they aim for.⁶⁹

The mentality that views marriage and home as the sole destiny of girls is also grounded in Rwandan traditional thinking. Girls' social role was defined in relation to their future as wives and mothers in charge of bearing, caring and looking after the children of the community. Mothers were required to begin early to teach them the basic principles of being a good wife, particularly how to care for the husband and the children. All duties that girls performed within the households were related to what they were meant to do once married. Restriction on where to go and where not to go, what to do and what not to do was a kind of bondage. Men decided what was best for women.

Rwandan women's access to education has been hindered by this mentality which the colonial administration and Christianity failed to challenge. Since education was first for those who could work in administration, and girls were excluded from positions of power, there was a long furrow to plough before girls could be accepted into schools. For men there was no such need. This corroborates with the observation of Jeaveau for whom social relations between the sexes are characterised by the domination of women by men:

⁶⁹ Parasso, E., *Ne pleure pas, hurle!*, 1973, pp.55-56. Tr. P.Nz.

... societies are dominated by men who exert not only physical power but also have confiscated social speech and use it to their advantage. History, oral or written by men, ... retains only the important achievements of men..⁷⁰

This was true for both the colonial authority and Christian missionaries for whom men had priority in education. When the sons of the chiefs were being enrolled in schools, nothing was planned for daughters of chiefs. Even Bishop Hirth, one of the founders of the Roman Catholic Church in Rwanda, could think of nothing that could be done for them.⁷¹ Small steps taken by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, show that even when the importance of educating girls began to be perceived, girls could not get as many opportunities as their brothers. The suggestion by Bishop Hirth to at least try to teach Bible stories to a few earnest girls after Sunday services hides the fact that he underestimated girls' ability to learn as boys did. Mies contends that this attitude is rooted in a long tradition in which women, nature and colonies were subordinated to men. She noted that for the last four or five centuries, 'women, nature and colonies were externalised, declared to be outside civilised society, pushed down, and thus made invisible as the under-water part of an invisible iceberg'.⁷² As a result the process of girls getting into education was slow. For instance in 33 primary schools existing in Rwanda in 1910, out of 1260 children, there were only 279, a quarter of the total. But few girls could go further than the first year of primary school. While 15 boys joined the Rubya Seminary in 1904, girls had to wait 10 years for the two first Rwandan girls to enter the Sisters Order of 'Benebikira'.⁷³ These early figures do not mean that girls continued to enter schools, at different times there were no girls taken into schools. In 1925 the colonial administration recognised that education had failed the girls.⁷⁴

Girls continued to be prevented from going to school and thus prevented from entering the employment market. For instance in the area of government and administration there were no woman ministers until the coalition government of 1992. Nor were there any women *prefets* (district administrators) or *bourgmestres*

⁷⁰ Javeau, Cl., *Lecons de sociologie*, Paris, Merdiens Klincksieck, 1988, p.182 Tr. P. Nz.

⁷¹ Societe missionnaire d'Afrique, *Rapport annuel de 1908-1909*, p.75. cf. 'De l'ecole de la station', Circulaire de Mgr Hirth, on the 1/1/1912.

⁷² Mies, M., *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*, London: Zed Books, 1986, p.77

⁷³ Nothomb, D., *Petite histoire de l'Eglise catholique au Rwanda*, inedit, p.30

⁷⁴ *Rapport sur l'administration belge au Rwanda-Urundi*, presente aux chambres, Bruxelles, 1925, p.77

(communal administrators). Only seven per cent of positions of responsibility within government were held by women.⁷⁵ It was also noted that, as late as 1992, when children first enrolled for primary school, the number of girls and boys was almost equal, it was the girls who dropped out as the years went by, or were withdrawn by their parents.⁷⁶ As result the number of girls in secondary schools and university was far lower than that of boys.

For the few girls who could go to secondary school, the fact that a woman's role was largely defined in terms of her eventual marriage was reflected in the kind of education they were to get. Most of them were provided with courses that prepared them for their role as wives and mothers.

Yet, as mother, wife and housekeeper, the Rwandan woman is recognized as the pillar of the family life, the source of peace and happiness.⁷⁷ Mies observed that in most pastoralist and agriculturist communities, women are needed respectively as breeders of children, particularly of sons, and for farming labour.⁷⁸ Given her outstanding contribution in the process of production and reproduction, the Rwandan woman ought to be economically empowered to accomplish this task. Instead Rwandan culture and mentality limit her access to certain important resources such as land⁷⁹ and education. Her situation worsened with the coming of colonialism. The introduction of the cash economy made more divisions within households by allocating men to cash crops and women to food crops. Attention was directed to the man to the detriment of the woman in all spheres of life. With little or no access to literacy and numeracy skills, her emancipation has been very difficult to achieve, causing the gap between men and women to increase even further.

Being limited in education opportunities on the one hand, while her access to land was non-existent meant that the Rwandan woman was among the most excluded of the Rwandan community. The two main reasons behind women's exclusion from land are the unclear and biased law that promotes equality in theory but does not implement it and a male biased tradition that does not recognize the equality of

⁷⁵ Waller, D., *op.cit.*, p.56

⁷⁶ *ibid*

⁷⁷ Gatwa, T. & Karamage, A., *Les Autres Chretiens Rwandais, Presence Protestante*, Kigali: Urwego, 1990, p.46

⁷⁸ Mies, M., *op.cit.*, pp.63/64

⁷⁹ Reseau des Femmes oeuvrant pour le Developpement rural, *Rapport du Seminaire sur la Femme et la terre*; Gitarama, 20 au 22 Novembre 1991.

women and men. Article 16 of the Rwandan constitution stipulates the equality of all Rwandan citizens,⁸⁰ and article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which Rwanda signed, has it that 'every person has right to a property. Nobody should be deprived of his/her property'. The article 26 of the civil and political Pact holds that 'all persons are equal before the law and have rights to equal protection by the law. In this regard, the law must forbid all discrimination and ensure to everybody equal and effective protection particularly against sex discrimination.'

At the same time Article 19⁸¹ of the Rwandan civil code gives to the husband the right to be head of the household. He is required to protect his wife and she is required to obey him, and both are required to offer mutual help and assistance. Article 20 obliges the wife to follow her husband wherever he chooses to live. Article 122 forbids the wife to conclude any form of contract, be it to buy a property or to receive a donation, without the permission of the husband.

These ambiguities in Rwandan law, coupled with the male dominated culture, have led to a situation where women were left unprotected by the same law that was supposed to protect them. Not only can they not undertake any judicial commitment without the permission of the husband, but also their activities (work in the fields, bringing up children, keeping house) benefit mainly the husband. For instance when the couple is divorced, despite all the wife's contribution, all that she is entitled to is literally the 'provision' or *impamba* which literally means the food which a traveller takes on a journey. It symbolizes a pack-meal that the woman will take home; it does not mean something she can live on. Everything (including children) belongs and remains in the hands of the husband (on the grounds that the husband has paid the dowry). So the equality that is stated in law is not taken into account at the time of separation when every one's efforts and contribution should be taken into account and valued.

In addition Rwandan custom excludes girls from inheriting land from their fathers. The exception is for divorced women and unmarried girls too old to be considered for marriage. These receive a portion of land just enough for their survival. A widow can continue to use her husband's land only if she can be married to one of the brothers of the deceased husband, or on the grounds that she is looking after the

⁸⁰ Ntampaka C., 'Evolution du Statut de la Terre et Droits de la Femme', in *Rapport du Seminaire sur la Femme et la Terre*, Novembre 1991, Gitarama publie par le Reseau des Femmes oeuvrant pour le Developpement rural, p. 7. Other articles on women and land have been taken from the same author.

⁸¹ Ibid.

children of the deceased husband (her children actually). If however, she decides to marry another man, she loses everything acquired from the previous marriage including the children who have to remain in the deceased husband's family.

It is also difficult for a Rwandan woman to win a legal case, if she decides to take a family matter to court; not only does the society view her negatively but also she is not expected to win the case. So the outcome will vary according to the mindset of the judges and the ability, endurance and alliances of the woman in defending her case. Cases that have been successful were those which involved educated women who had the intellectual and economic capital to fight for their rights. For Rwandan women denial of education and land meant denial of self-defence. For instance in the countryside, where the majority of women live, they do not bother to seek help from the court. Women suffer in silence and continue to follow male biased custom which men always hold on to as it benefits them. For women, being deprived of land-ownership was adding 'insult to injury:' dehumanizing, degrading and excluding. This is an exclusion made and maintained by men. The following poem echoes the cries and lamentations of women in many parts of Rwanda:

I am not destined to be a pauper; you made me into one
I am not destined to be dumb
But you snatched the opportunity from me
I am not destined to be "half-human"
Yet you formed me into one⁸²

Should not Rwandan Christians be concerned if a genuine *koinonia* is to be built and that the fellowship is still characterised by such social exclusion against women? Is not time to question the habit of setting policies and structures from a male perspective which continues to blind itself to the hardship Rwandan women live in?

5.5. Exclusion from employment market

Exclusion from education has far-reaching implications, particularly in relation to job opportunities. Since the introduction of salaried jobs, Rwandans have developed a thirst for money and what it can buy. Although they found an alternative in cash

⁸² Usog, M.C., 'Doing Theology: Contextualized Theology (God-talk, Women speak)'; in *Voices from the Third World*. Vol. XXI No1 June 1998, pp. 193-204. For the plight of Rwandan women, see also Overdulse, C.M., *Le défis des pauvres: de la fonction diaconale de l'Eglise au Rwanda*, Butare (Rwanda): Editions de la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Butare, 1991, pp.96/7

cropping, either the land was not sufficient to give substantial income, or the prices were inadequate.

There were only two ways of getting into the monetary system. One was to go to school, get a qualification, and then a salaried job. The second was to get into business. The latter presented Rwandans with a number of insurmountable difficulties. Lack of purchasing power on the part of most people, lack of the little capital necessary to start with, and lack of basic business skills. Education being the only route to a better life, being deprived of it meant being denied job, work and income.

For those excluded by the system, work and job became a symbol of other people's trickery, cheating and deception; education and employment they saw as a system that excluded them. Women could see the working of land as a sign of their exclusion and domination. As more Tutsis received mission school education, the number of Hutus occupying lower-and middle-level colonial administrative positions declined.⁸³ The marginalisation became more marked at administrative level: in the thirties the Belgians systematically dismissed the Hutu chiefs and replaced them, even in the north, where they were powerful and respected, with Tutsis. According to Funga and Prunier, in the 1950s, 31 of the 33 members of the "conseil superieur" were Tutsi. All the 45 chiefs were Tutsis, and 544 out of 559 sub-chiefs were Tutsis.⁸⁴ At the time of independence the situation slightly changed: 43 out of 45 chiefs were Tutsis and 549 out of 559 sub-chiefs were Tutsis.⁸⁵

After independence in 1962, the process was reversed. In line with its ideology of the 'social revolution', the new Hutu elite developed a policy of systematic discrimination against Tutsis, especially in the army, the government, and the public service. The army, diplomatic service and parliament were almost exclusively reserved for Hutus.⁸⁶ By 1990, out of 143 bourgmestres, none were Tutsis. From eleven prefects, only one was Tutsi. Only one Tutsi was a member of the Rwandese diplomatic corps, only one was a cabinet minister, and only two out of seventy members of parliament were Tutsis. The security forces showed the most marked

⁸³ Taylor, C. C., *op. cit.* p.59

⁸⁴ Funga, F., 'Pouvoir, ethnies et régions', in *Dialogue* No 149 (Nov.-Dec.) 1991, p.24 . See also Prunier, G., *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, New York: Columbia University Press. 1995, p. 27

⁸⁵ Braeckman, C., *op. cit.* p. 36

⁸⁶ Physicians for Human Rights, *Rwanda 1994, A report of the Genocide*, London, 1994

concentration of northern Hutu. The army, gendarmerie, and the Presidential Guard were dominated by close relatives of the President and his wife, and other men from the north-west. Favouritism percolated through the ranks and Tutsis were almost completely excluded from the army and gendarmerie.⁸⁷

Furthermore, within the Hutus, there was blatant favouritism towards the north-west. For example natives of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri took half of the senior positions in parastatal companies. The three prefectures of Gisenyi, Ruhengeri and Kigali (from a total of eleven) took more than half of the government budget allocated to regional government and development activities.⁸⁸

The competition for education and jobs opposed the Hutu elite to the Tutsi elite, and the Northern Hutu elite against the centre-southern Hutu elite.⁸⁹ The 1959 social revolution was a struggle for political change. The 1973 pogrom began as an attempt to purge Tutsis from Butare University and other educational institutions, including seminaries. In early 1990s, the same sentiment mobilized many Hutu –including well educated people – to attempt the same purge on a grander scale; and the leading Hutu extremists throughout the country were often people in salaried positions in government.⁹⁰ In November 1992, at the height of the conflicts, Leon Mugesera, one of the highly educated and close friends of the then president Habyarimana, said on the Rwandan Radio, that all Tutsis were enemies of Rwanda and had to be sent back to Ethiopia where they originally came from through the river Nyabarango.⁹¹ A year later, the river Nyabarango was being filled with bodies of Tutsis and Hutus said to be accomplices because of their opposition to ethnic cleansing.

The practice of ethnic and regional discrimination from school and jobs stands against the divine mandate which stresses the individual's responsibility to allow and enable others to work. So to prevent another person working, or deny or deprive him of work, is to offend against his humanity and the image of God in him, as well as failing in one's responsibility to God for him.⁹² The brotherly love that Jesus laid on

⁸⁷ African Rights, *op. cit.*, p.21

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Willame, J.C., *Aux sources de l'hetacombe*, p.85. See also Wiame. J., 'Le labyrinthe bantou', *Pourquoi Pas?*, 17 juin 1973, pp.49-50

⁹⁰ African Rights, *op.cit.*, p.22

⁹¹ Willame. J. C., *op.cit.*, p. 102. Tutsis have been said to have originated from the Nile region which includes Ethiopia; cf. Introduction, 1.2.

⁹² Wright, C. J.H., *op.cit.*, 1983, p.69

his followers requires a determination to remove restrictions on access to education and employment.

Furthermore, the Rwandan competition for education and jobs puts two kinds of ethic in contrast to each other: work ethic versus citizen ethics. Under the 'citizen ethic', the person belongs not to himself but to the community.⁹³ The philosophy is that within the community, since education, nurture and capital are provided by others, earnings gained should not be considered as individual. Individual's earnings are a product of the community as much as of labour, so the community has a call upon those earnings, or a proportion of them.

The 'work ethic' applies in the reverse direction. The individual who works is the one who is to be rewarded, is the one who is to enjoy the benefits the labour has produced. But theologically, under the concept of stewardship and of *koinonia*, the person's labour and abilities belong not to himself but to God. Both the 'citizen ethic' and the principle of *koinonia* are bound to challenge those Rwandan individuals who wish to be indebted to no one and who like to think their status is a result of their own efforts.

5.6.Conclusion

This chapter shows the failure of the Rwandan Christian community in formulating an adequate theology of education, a failure to appreciate that education is a divine mandate to the Christian community. It should be carried out in a way that honours God, and in a way that enhances human life and does not destroy it. Instead, education was left to be manipulated and used in the interests of individuals and small groups of the Rwandan community. The aim and content of education and the way educational opportunities were distributed polarized Rwandans. Privileged groups maintained hard boundaries and shut out others. Both Hutu and Tutsi ruling élites, Northern and centre-southern élites were then engaged in unrestrained competition for education and jobs. The subsequent forms of exclusion which were sometimes hidden under the superficial spirituality and mass conversion of Rwandans, needed only a small event to expose how deep the Rwandan community was divided and decayed.

⁹³ Walter, T., *op.cit.*, 1985, p.19

Each side used the propaganda that told their ethnic group that their lands, their possessions and even their lives were in danger if they let the other group get the upper hand in the situation. This definition of individual interests as group interests is a powerful strategy for maintaining a monopolistic control on resources. Banton observed that 'A monopoly pattern in racial and group relations can be maintained only when members of the privileged group can be persuaded that their individual interests point in the same direction as that in which they believe their collective interests to lie'.⁹⁴ It is this propaganda, when stretched, which leads to the most physical confrontation.⁹⁵ The 1994 genocide to which the mass uncritically adhered is only most powerful example of the many outcomes of the kind of education available or unavailable to Rwandans and the way it was distributed.

⁹⁴ Banton, M., *op.cit.*, p.119

⁹⁵ Frazier, E.F., *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1957, p.92

CHAPTER SIX

THE PAUPERISATION OF THE RWANDAN COMMUNITY

6.1. Introduction

Never before were the struggle and competition for political and economic power fiercer than in the 1970s and 1980s. Social, economic and spiritual development were being driven in a direction that most Rwandans did not intend and most would not have consciously chosen. The new race for enrichment, from which the clergy did not escape, created a situation of anarchy which benefited the same elite that caused it. Violence between groups increased, and the Rwandan Christian community stumbled into a chaos that never existed before. Indeed the Rwandan situation was worse than that in the period of Nehemiah who imposed a social reform for the sake of the Israelite community.

Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish kin. For there were those who said, with our sons and our daughters, we are many; we must get grain, so that we may eat and stay alive. There were also those who said, 'We are having to pledge our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine. And there were those who said, 'We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king's tax. Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our flesh children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others. Nehemiah 5:1-5.

The rest of the chapter shows an angry Nehemiah forcing the exploiters to return money, land and produce to those who had suffered, and exacting a promise from the priests to see the reforms carried out. Nehemiah himself did not make the accepted exactions, allowed to a governor, and his staff, on the people 'because of the fear of God'.

No such leader existed among the Rwandan Christian community when it desperately needed more spiritual and theological guidance. The preaching of Rwandan clergy against illicit acquisition was matched only by their zeal to obtain it. In fact, too often, church leaders' sympathies and close relationships were with the wealthy and ruling class.

This chapter describes to what extent the Rwandan Christian community had become polarised into rich and poor during the period that led to the 1994 Genocide. It is not the intention to argue for or against wealth or poverty. It is rather to reaffirm two theological principles; that the co-existence of extreme poverty and extreme wealth destroy the community¹ but that wealth is good when it is used for the benefit of the community. That was the main component of Jesus' social teaching. "Wealth is shown to be a good, but good only when it is a social good and when its pursuit does not weaken those impulses within a man that go out towards his fellows and God, and so render him unfit for the kingdom of heaven".² For this argument, it is important to clear away three misunderstandings that have influenced the social behaviour of the Rwandan Christian community: that what God wants to be achieved is community of goods, that accumulation of wealth is a sign of God blessing, and that wealth is evil to be rejected by anyone who wants to be a good Christian.

6.2. Conflicting views on the possession of wealth

The economic oppression and exploitation under the kings in traditional Rwanda, led to the temptation to believe that taking land and other resources from the king's control was a way forward.³ The *ubuhake* system had already caused so much hardship that the majority of people wanted changes. But the threat of growing individualism in the colonial and post colonial periods caused some Christians to think that holding resources in common should be the second step.⁴

It is sometime argued that true and genuine unity among God's people can only be achieved if they hold all things in common.⁵ Tillich noted that most existential philosophers thought that only thus can a genuine community between man and man be possible.⁶ Gerard Winstanley (1609-1676) envisioned that in such a community "there shall be no buying and selling of the earth, nor of the fruits thereof". Winstanley's statement is to be understood within its seventeenth century context.

¹ Sider, R.S., *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, pp.64/65

² Matthews, S., *The Social Teachings of Jesus Christ – An Essay in Christian Sociology*, New York: MacMillan, 1897, p.148

³ Linden, I., *op.cit.*, p.206

⁴ Roman Catholic missionaries worried of the onslaught of atheistic Marxism. See Linden, I., *op.cit.* p. 169

⁵ Dupont, J., 'L'union entre les premiers Chrétiens dans les Actes des Apôtres,' in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* No91, 1969, pp.903-908

⁶ Tillich, P., *op.cit.*, 1959, p.105

Governments under kings, whom he called the cheaters, “hereby have grabbed and possessed every thing on Earth, and call it theirs, and not the others’, and so have brought in that poverty and misery which lies upon many men.” He noted that whereas the wise should help the foolish, and the strong help the weak, the wise and strong destroy the weak and simple. According to him the concept of buying and selling is to blame. For him “buying and selling is the nursery of cheats; it is the law of the Conqueror, the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees” who, cunning cheaters as they were became “the Rulers of the earth”. Therefore, continues Winstanley, “there shall be no buying and selling in a free common-wealth neither shall anyone hire his Brother to work for him”⁷

The alternative system proposed by Winstanley would operate on the basis that the “earth is to be planted and the fruits reaped and carried into barns and storehouses by the assistance of every family”... “If any man or family want corn or other provisions, they may go to the storehouses and fetch it without money. If they want a horse to ride, to go into the fields in summer, or to the common Stables in Winter, and receive one from the Keepers, when their journey is completed, they return it without money. If they want food, they may either go to the butchers’ shops and receive what they want without money, or else go to the flocks of sheep or herds of cattle, and take and kill what meat is needful for their families, without buying and selling.”⁸

Winstanley thought no good person would oppose such a system where love for the friend and the enemy is the highest virtue that commands human action. He says: “None will be an enemy to this Freedom, which, indeed, is to do to another as a man would have another do to him, but Covetousness and Pride, the spirit of the old grudging, snapping Pharisees, who give God and abundance of good words in their sermons, in their prayers, in their fasts, and in their Thanksgivings, as though none should be more faithful servants to him than they. Nay, they will shun the company, imprison, and kill every one that will not worship God, they are so zealous.”⁹

A kind of support Winstanley’s for contentious argument, is the fact that the company of Jesus’ followers had a common purse (John 12:19; 13:6); that the

⁷ From Lewis H. Berens, *The Digger Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth As Revealing in the writings Reformer of Gerard Winstanley, the Digger: Mystic and Rationalistic, Communist and Social Reform*, London: Holland Press and Merlin Press, 1961, pp.216-217.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

members of the primitive Jerusalem church 'had all things in common' (Acts 2:44,45); and that 'not one of them said that any of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common' (Acts 4:32). Some Christians have come to conclude that holding things in common should be at the heart of Christianity.¹⁰

However, the two biblical texts that talk about holding things in common point to the problems of such a system. Ananias and Sapphira failed to give all the money from the sale of their property. The early communism was accompanied by an ascetism too severe for modern Christians. These two points demonstrate the weakness of Winstanley's ideas which did not take account of human psychology. He did not say what would happen if the butcher did not wish to give the meat that another family needed; nor what would happen if individual families refused to bring their crops to the barns or storehouses. What if the horse keeper does not let it go, or when the man who took it did not bring it back to the stable? These are not hypothetical questions but the realities of every day life. Nor did Winstanley seem to have recognised that human nature is inclined to selfishness and greed. He also underestimated the question as to what extent people will be motivated to produce goods when they know that they will not have any control whatsoever over them.

Some commentators find the biblical foundation for the community of goods irrelevant to today's context. Johnson¹¹ contends that the scriptural basis for the community of possessions as the ideal way for Christians to share goods is slender, superficial, selective, and suspect. He argues that by attempting to construct a way of life on the basis of a utopian vision of humanity, rather than on the discernment of God's Word in the concrete circumstances of worldly life, the notion of the community of goods is ideologically rather than theologically based. Divesting human beings of property is a naïve way of redressing imbalances between people. For him the danger in pressing the community of goods is to use possessions themselves as a criterion for being accepted in the community or as an ideology. When the practice is structured by the ideology of obedience, it replaces the responsibility of the human person to dispose of himself or herself and possessions in response to God's call in the circumstances of life with the demands of rule and of the leader. It encourages spiritual immaturity, irresponsibility and alienation.

¹⁰ Matthews, S., *op.cit.*, p.150

¹¹ Johnson, L.T., *Sharing Possessions*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981, pp.131/133

Critics say that the *koinonia* as practised by early Christians pointed to something more important than the community of goods. Fitzmyer, for instance, believes that *koinonia* denotes something more than communal ownership of goods, the common 'breaking of bread, communal meals and contributions for the relief of the needy. It signified the communal spirit of co-operation and fellowship existing among the early Christians.¹²

Another theological view that has had an effect on Rwandan's attitude towards wealth is that wealth and prosperity are signs of God's blessing. This 'prosperity theology' originated in the United States under the influence of Kenneth E. Hagin in the 1950s. It teaches that "God desires that all faithful Christians should automatically prosper as of divine right"¹³. The Gospel of wealth as it came to be called, teaches that the atonement of Christ guarantees for all Christians the riches of the world if they follow certain principles.

It was in South Africa that prosperity preachers like Ray McCauley brought in the teaching that 'it is God's will to prosper every one of his children'¹⁴. The resulting growth in membership and attendance attracted many people in South Africa and beyond. In Rwanda, the influence of the prosperity theology got an impetus by the preaching of Reinhard Bonke . When he visited, thousands of Christians and even non-Christians gathered at the National Stadium to hear him. Bonke taught that if you believe in something strongly enough, you will get it. If you believe you will achieve a business deal. For him the key to success lies within each individual. Faith activates prosperity while poverty is a denial of the God's blessing. .¹⁵

The catch sentence for the prosperity theology is 'name it and claim it' which means you can have anything you want. You just name it and claim it; then it's yours; "believe it and receive it". If you want a piece of real estate, just name it, walk around it and claim it by faith; it will be yours to build your church on. If something is claimed, you must act on it as if you have already received it. If your faith is not

¹² Fitzmyer, A.J., 'Jewish Christianity in Acts in Light of the Qumran Scrolls', *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays presented in honor of Paul Schubert*, Buckingham Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale University, eds. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn, Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1966, p.241

¹³ Robert Jackson, 'Prosperity Theology and faith movement', *Themelios*, Vol.15. No1, October 1989, p.16

¹⁴ Sang-Bok D. Kim, "A Bed of Roses or a Bed of thorns" in *Evangelical Revue of Theology*, Vol.20, No1, Jan.1996,p.16

¹⁵ Ibid., p.19

real, or you have any doubt, you will not receive it”.¹⁶ This kind of faith was exemplified by some evangelists of the Free Methodist Church particularly in the eastern part of Rwanda who used it in order to get land on which to erect church buildings. After spotting some good land for the construction of the church, a group of Christians would come and pray on it and then go to the owner of the land and say that God had given them this land. If the owner was a Christian, he was bound to accept the inspiration of the group or face exclusion.

For prosperity theologians God is a multiplier. “Give one house and receive one hundred homes or one house with one hundred times as much. Give one air-plane and receive one hundred times the value of the air-plane. Give one car and the return will furnish you a lifetime of cars. In short Mark 10:30 is a very good deal”¹⁷. Testimonies like: “one day I gave so much money to God’s ministry and the next day I found a new job” or ‘my boss gave me an increase in salary’, or ‘after I gave that piece of land to the Church God blessed me with such and such’, are common among prosperity teachers.

Prosperity theology has attracted much criticism. It is regarded by some as unbiblical and even heretical because its claim to be Christian cannot be substantiated. For Sang, some of the techniques for prosperity appear to be more psychological than spiritual. It gives an impression that man can, by the use of formula, force the hand of God to grant what he desires. To view material success and physical health as a divine right is simplistic, and the methods and techniques of achieving prosperity can amount to blackmail.¹⁸

Sang further argues that prosperity teachers sometimes create possible heresy because of the over-emphasis of one truth while ignoring the other truth which is equally clear. “One of the major problems of prosperity teachers is their one-sidedness, losing sight of the other side of the coin, while those who see the Christian life only as a path of suffering, make the same mistake”. For Sang, it is not wealth or poverty that matter; but the attitude. “Some prospered, while others suffered, both equally by faith. Those who achieved great feats did so by faith and those who suffered greatly in distinction did so likewise by faith. Both were approved by God for their faith, not just those who could have been called prosperous. Both groups

¹⁶ Copeland, G., *God’s will is Prosperity*, Harrison House, 1978. P.80.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Sang-Bok, D. Kim, *op.cit.*, p.20

had the expectations of a better resurrection and some thing better to come. (...) Whether in prosperity or poverty we are to trust the Lord. It is erroneous in light of the Scriptures to claim that the atonement of Christ guarantees all Christians health, wealth and prosperity here on earth”.¹⁹

McConnell points out that prosperity theology, by overly stressing prosperity, leads Christians to neglect the cross in their lives²⁰. For Young, “the true meaning of prosperity is likely to be distorted when the outcome of prosperity or its state alone is emphasised. For this reason, the paths to prosperity should be given major consideration. Only when these paths are acceptable to God, can prosperity have some meaning and value”.²¹ Similarly Romero condemned the view of wealth which leads to idolatry: “let us not tire of denouncing the idolatry of wealth, which makes human greatness consist in having and forgets that true greatness is in being. One’s value is not in what one has, but in what one is”²² Young reiterated Paul’s advice in Act:20:35; 2Cor. 8:1-15, that the important thing for Christians is how the gift, indeed the blessing of God is used, rather than taking pleasure in accumulating those gifts.

To be given a measure of wealth, fame, and self-fulfilment is to be given a gift to be used with great care for the glory of God. (...) the purpose of prosperity is to glorify God and to help our neighbours. This is because all that we have has come from God. Serious problems will rise if we become interested in the blessing itself, forgetting God; the source of all blessings. The true purpose of prosperity is to share it with others and not to keep it to oneself.²³

These critics seem to corroborate the underlying values imbedded in the principle of *koinonia* according to which when Christians share their possessions with others they do three things at the same time: they acknowledge that all their possessions belong to God (1Chron.29:14); they understand that what they do to their neighbours, they do to God (Matt.25:25; Heb.13:16) and they trust God more than the materials by giving God what is God’s (Mal.3:7-10).

¹⁹ *ibid.* p.22

²⁰ McConnell, D. R., ‘A Different Gospel: The Cultic Nature of the Modern Faith’, A mss presented to Henderickson for publication in 1988, p.178. in Young Hoon.

²¹ Young Hoon Lee, “The case for prosperity Theology” in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol.20, No1, Jan. 1996, pp.30/31

²² Romero, O., *The Violence of Love* USA: The Plough Publishing House, 1998; p.170

²³ Young Hoon., *op.cit.*, p. 36

What we have is not ours to use in any way we desire. We are responsible for using whatever wealth we have for the Lord, particularly in the service of those who are in need. Therefore one of the motivations for giving and sharing is gratitude, rather than to gain more. God has lavished his love upon us by his many gifts to us, the greatest of which is the gift of his son.²⁴

The third theological view on the accumulation of wealth that also affected Rwandan Christians, possibly to a lesser extent, is that wealth is evil and Christians should leave it altogether. The Temperance movement in Rwanda took an extreme stand, believing that it was wiser either not to begin the pursuit of wealth, or if they had it, to give up all they owned. Like some monastic orders, they demanded a complete renunciation of wealth as a way of shouting no to the prevailing values of the Rwandan society. It is the rule of Saint Benedict which became typical of monastic orders:

The vice of private property is above all to be cut off from the Monastery by the roots. Let none presume to give or receive anything without the leave of the Abbot, nor to keep anything as their own, either book or writing tablet or pen, or anything whatsoever.²⁵

The difference between the Rwandan Temperance movement and the monks is that the latter renounced possessions in order to learn detachment, while the former held that wealth is worldly and detestable in God's eyes.

Critics say that an attitude that takes wealth as worthless lacks understanding and honesty. "We do not switch our faith on and off like an electric light bulb as we move in and out of different aspects".²⁶ For Carey the Bible contains much that supports saving and provision for the future and Christian involvement in economic and financial activities. Jesus did not condemn wealth as such and there are biblical accounts that present wealth as positive thing.²⁷

²⁴ "Statement on Prosperity theology and Theology of suffering" in *Evangelical Revue of Theology*, Vol 20, No1, Jan 1996, p.8

²⁵ Quoted in Mills P., 'Faith Versus Prudence? Christians and Financial Security'. Cambridge Papers. *Towards a Biblical Mind*. Vol.4,no1,1995.p.3

²⁶ George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, 'Chains around Africa: Crisis or hope for the New Millennium?' in *Proclaim Liberty*, 1998, p.6

²⁷ Apart from the beatitudes where Jesus said 'blessed are the poor' which is sometimes misinterpreted to mean what Jesus did not intend to say i.e. that the state of poverty is per se a state of blessedness, neither Jesus nor the Bible as whole endorse poverty. Rather Christians are to work hard to relieve it.

The three theological views on wealth (community of goods, individualism and leaving it altogether) expose how important it is that Christians as a community understand what wealth is for. Biblical theology is concerned rather with the building of the community of God's people first than with any attempt to hold wealth in common. The understanding of what it means to be God's people would dictate how people conduct their social life. As Wersteeg puts it, when a person comes face to face with a personal God and dedicates his/her life to him and his purpose, he/she cannot afterwards claim anything of his/her own apart from God.²⁸ This is to say, dedicate people first and then possessions second; not the other way round. It is in such a way that Christian economics can inspire God's people to a right use of material possessions by devoting them to uses that glorify God. And the use that glorifies God is the use for the community, His people. Such an understanding would turn the classical economical theory that wealth must work for the satisfaction of human beings, and transform it into the stewardship economy that says; wealth must work for the satisfaction of God. The former purpose is entirely satisfied by the second but the second is not necessarily satisfied by the first. For 'there can be no genuine sense of Christian stewardship unless it springs from a profound conviction of God's sovereign ownership'²⁹

The account of Joseph in Egypt offers an example of God's call to store the surplus for bad times ahead and for the use for the community. Without Joseph's foresight, both Egyptians and Israelites would have perished. In this context divine wisdom is characterised by prudence and foresight: "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has" Prov.21:20; 6:6-8). Paul's attack on those who could not subjugate their immediate desires in favour of future needs ("let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" 1Cor.15:32) shows God's disapproval.

On the other hand, Christians should distance themselves from the accumulation of wealth which does not serve the community, which aims at selfish individualism; because this kind of wealth can be a rival deity usurping God's worship: "No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24). This verse presents money as an idol competing with the true God for Christian worship. "By personifying wealth as a slave-owner in competition with

²⁸ Wersteeg, J.M., *When Christ Controls*, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943, p.158

²⁹ Muncy, J., *Fellowship with God*, Kansas City: Central Seminary Press, 1949, Chapter III.

God for our allegiance. Jesus places wealth in the ranks of the spiritual powers of evil used to seduce us away from adherence to God.”³⁰

Bonhoeffer echoed this argument and said that “our hearts have room only for one all-embracing devotion, and we can only cleave to one Lord”³¹ Foster went a little further, and suggested that money has a seductive and spiritual power. “What we must recognise is the seductive power of Mammon. Money has power, spiritual power, to win our hearts. Behind our coins and dollar bills or whatever material form we choose to give to our money are spiritual forces”.³²

In this sense wealth can be a barrier separating a person from his God and from his neighbours. It can impinge on faith in divine providence. When taken as the ultimate source of security in one’s life, then wealth usurps worship that should be reserved to God alone. This occurs when people’s acts of savings are motivated by the instinctive human desire for material security and certainty in the future. For the Psalmist as well as for the Gospels, true security is to be found only in God’s provision (Ps 62:8-10; Mt.6:25-34; Lk.12:22-31; cf. Pr.3:5-6.). The accumulation of riches can lead to a withering of faith in providential care resulting in self-reliance and pride (Dt.8:13,14; Mk.4:19; Lk12:16-21; 18:18-25).

As a check on the risks of wealth accumulation resulting in inequalities between rich and poor in the community of God’s people, biblical theology summarises the divine imperative in three ways: (i)The mystical symbol of the manna in the wilderness which was also worked out practically in the laws that were to govern the settled life of the kingdom. God commanded his people not to take more than they actually needed (it actually went bad if kept overnight). (ii)The law of gleaning where Hebrews were not to be mean. They were not to reap to the very edges of their fields, nor cut the loose stalks that fell free of the swathe, nor go back for the odd sheaf which had been left behind on the field. (iii)The law of limited cropping which demonstrates an important aspect of Sabbath practice. Taylor noted that the law of limited cropping not only points to the fact that land should not be over-exploited (every seventh year the fields must lie fallow and no planting between the lines), but

³⁰ Mills, P., ‘Faith versus Prudence? Christians and Financial Security’ in *Cambridge Papers – towards a biblical mind*, volume 4, number 1 – March 1995.p.2

³¹ Quoted in Edouard W. Bauman, ‘Where Your Treasure Is’ Arlington, Va ... Bauman Bible Telecasts, 1980, p.74.

³² Foster, R., *Money, Sex and Power: The spiritual disciplines of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985, p.26

also to the altruistic motive (the ox and the ass must have a rest, the slaves and aliens must refresh themselves and the poor must get a crop from the unpruned vines). (iv) the law of the first-fruits state the law which is also seen as another check on excess.³³

Although some critics dismiss this biblical legislation saying that it never took effect³⁴, it would be inappropriate to underestimate its importance for the life of the Jewish community. There is evidence to suggest that, as in any circumstances, there has been both practice and failure.³⁵ What is important is that the legislation tells of a recognition of growing inequalities as a recurrent fact of life, not to be simply accepted as ‘the way things are’ but as demanding a corrective response.³⁶ So they remain powerful images, not as political programs for today but as illustrations of the attitude that is necessary intervening to prevent injustice building on injustice and denying hope.³⁷

Therefore wealth can be bad or good depending on how its owner uses it. And the way individual Christians use their wealth will be seen in the inequalities between rich and poor Christians living in the same community. Wesley’s conclusion is true when he says that ‘the fault does not lie in the money, but in them that use it’. He noted that although money is an excellent gift of God answering the noblest ends, it can also be used to carry out an evil plan. Thus he called upon every Christian to be wise. ‘It is highly commendable’, he argues, ‘that all who fear God know how to employ this valuable talent; that they be instructed how it may answer these glorious ends and in the highest degree’. He summarised his instructions on money in three important inseparable rules: ‘gain all you can’, ‘save all you can’, and ‘give all you can’.³⁸ In other words: work hard, be prudent in the use of the produce, use it for the sake of the community of God’s people. The Rwandan experience tells of a

³³ Brueggemann, & Taylor, J.V., *op. cit.* p. 51-55.

³⁴ Morton, A., (ed.) (1998) *Beyond Fear: Vision, Hope and Generosity*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, p. 81

³⁵ Logan Pat, ‘The biblical jubilee: political economy and Christian realism’ in *Proclaim Liberty: Reflections on theology and debt*. Published by Christian Aid. (1998) p. 56

³⁶ Morton, A., (ed.), *op.cit.*, 1998, p.81

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Though the founder of Methodism and the leading figure of the evangelical revival in eighteenth-century Britain, John Wesley (1703-1791) did not write a systematic compendium of his theology or of his various sermons and treatises, his approach to moral issues becomes clear: one’s faith must be active in love. Wesley’s unique stress on the sanctified life is described in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, the last revision of which was made in 1777. More specific issues are addressed in *The Use of Money* (1760), *Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of provisions* (1773) and *Thoughts upon Slavery* (1774).

dangerous race for wealth accumulation, resulting in increasing socio-economic inequalities between rich and poor Rwandan Christians, between rich towns and poor countryside.

6.3. A minority of wealthy versus a poor majority

When the Rwandan socio-economic reality of the 1970s and 1980s is confronted with the theological discussion above, it is possible to see to what extent excessive competition for social prestige and economic resources destroyed the Rwandan community. The situation had become like that in old Israel that Nehemiah describes in chapter 5. Most of the prophets spoke against social-economic injustice that threatened the Hebrew society. Much of Jesus' social teachings reflect God's concern for poor people in a community in which rich people held regular banquets and feasts. The Rwandan case shows how, through corruption, embezzlement and abuse of power, some Christians made fortunes while still claiming to be of one community with their very poor fellows. There were excessive and noticeable economic inequalities between the ruling class and the rest of the population.

Rwandans have a tradition of high admiration of wealth since it offered social prestige. The chief loci of their economic life was economic advancement through the acquisition of cows, land, wives and children; and later on access to the state bureaucracy.³⁹ In most cases it was the state bureaucracy that guaranteed wealth accumulation. In pre-colonial times, administrative control, clientship used to be the principal way for the ruling class to acquire wealth.⁴⁰ In colonial times, many traditional prerogatives of patrons were transferred to the state and bureaucracy. These included demands of forced labour on farmers and a share of the taxes collected. Rwanda became an intensively administered society, a pyramid of bureaucracy. The changes and reforms promised by the new Republic after independence did not materialise. In the 1960s till early 1970s, the then government transformed the state and the parastatal companies into instruments of patronage. The Habyarimana regime which initially ferreted out the system of rewards that hid corruption, succumbed to the same temptation after a few years in power. The system

³⁹ Johansen, *op.cit.*, p. 131 when Pastor Johansen preached a sermon on the Good Shepherd, one of the chiefs argued that he did not need God for anything, because he had hundreds of cows, large lands and many wives. So he thought he was among the happiest Rwandans of his time.

⁴⁰ Maquet, J.J., *The Premise of Inequality*, A study of political relations in a central African Kingdom, London, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp.152-154

re-emerged, with a new group of beneficiaries and became even stronger than in previous periods.⁴¹

Once again land began to be concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. By the 1970s those in power and administration were already violating the land-holding system by buying land from the poor.⁴² By the 1980s, it was estimated that 43% of rural families owned only 15% of cultivated lands, with an average landholding per family of less than 0.75 ha. At the other end of the spectrum, 16% of families owned 43% of lands that were arable, but not efficiently used for production.⁴³ These lands produced six times less than the small plots of less than 2 hectares owned by poor families.⁴⁴ For the Rwandan government the existence of many Rwandans without land was a problem to which a solution had to be found. But instead of investigating how much land was held by a few individuals, the Rwandan government started negotiations with the Tanzanian government about the possibilities of mass resettlement of Rwandans into the West Lake region of Tanzania. But the project did not materialise. As noted earlier, the argument of land shortage was even used by Habyarimana's regime to refuse the return of refugees.

Other factors contributed to the concentration of wealth into the hands of a few bureaucratic and military elite. Foreign aid emerged as another source of wealth for the ruling class. Although Rwanda had been getting foreign subsidy since the early period of colonisation, it was only in the 1970s and 1980s, that Rwanda became one of the favourites for aid donors, receiving an estimate of \$ 200 million annually.⁴⁵ Its reputation for a well-managed economy and commitment to rural development attracted official and non-governmental aid agencies. However considerable amounts of these funds were embezzled by corrupt officials through established networks which ensured that even when investigated everything would be covered up. Sometimes a single operation involved five to ten individuals each one getting a share of the money embezzled.

⁴¹ Gasana K., *Church-State relations and other factors relating to the Hutu-Tutsi antagonism in Rwanda*, a paper presented at the Conference of Central Africa Health Care Organisation. Winona Lake, April 26, 1997.

⁴² In the 1970s, the problem of land shortage was so real that the government negotiations with Tanzania about the possibility of mass resettlement in the West Lake region of Tanzania, but this never materialized.

⁴³ Gasana K. James, *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Nsengimana, N. 'La guerre du Rwanda: Determinants internes et externes' in *Dialogue*, Novembre-Decembre 1997 no.201, p.35

⁴⁵ African Rights, *op. cit.*, p. 21, See also Copibo, Fos, Ncos & Vredeseilanden, *op.cit.*, for which foreign aid amounted to 10 billions FRW (Rwandan francs) per year.

In addition most government development projects were, in the main, macroeconomic in their design and dependent on the assumption that the trickle-down theory would distribute the benefits to all sections of the population, henceforth alleviate poverty. Evidence showed that the benefits of these development projects largely bypassed those they claimed to help: the poor.⁴⁶ Furthermore the government directed aid projects to its favoured regions the northern prefectures of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, while ministers and civil servants increased their habit of paying themselves generous exorbitant rewards. So by the end of 1980s disillusion with the government officials had been aroused, although aid kept coming in. State resources had already started to dry up, but the race after fortune speeded up. Commenting on the situation that prevailed in Rwanda at this time, Bezy noted "the period of equality of people has now gone: a quadriform bourgeoisie (military, administrative, business and technocratic) embezzle substantial sums of money from the public funds."⁴⁷ Similarly Newbury observed that one of the impacts of the economic changes of the 1980s was the widening gap between rich and poor as well the conflicting interests of the ruled and those in power.⁴⁸ This corroborates the World Bank report according to which where countries are appallingly governed, aid, -even humanitarian aid – only makes bad worse⁴⁹ as the money ends up in a few individual pockets. In the case of Rwanda, the wealth was concentrated in Habyarimana's family and a few associates.

According to Braeckman, Habyarimana (the then president of Rwanda) was learning bad lessons from his Zairean counterpart (Mobutu⁵⁰). The accumulation of wealth in the Habyarimana family, his wife, his children and his in-laws, began to surface. They operated the best hotels, restaurants, night clubs in Kigali such as Kigali Night, Tam-tam, and Motel Rebero which became the focus for entertainment and leisure

⁴⁶ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos & Vredeseilanden, *op.cit.*, p.27 Most of the development projects, including those that were designated as projects of national significance, did little to improve the productivity of the poor. Instead they improved the standard of living of bureaucrats, skilled workers and professionals. Examples are Le projet de Développement Global de Butare (DGB), Projet de Mise en Valeur des Plateaux de la Crete Zaire Nil (CZN), Projet de développement Rural de Byumba (DRB) and Programme Agricole de Gitarama (PAG). The results of these projects varied from little to nothing if measured against long term viability.

⁴⁷ Bezy, F., *Rwanda. Bilan Socio-économique d'un régime 1962 – 1989*, Louvain la-Neuve, Institut d'Etude des pays en développement, 1990, p.58, tr.P.Nz.

⁴⁸ Newbury, C., 'Rwanda: Recent Debates over Governance and rural Development' in Hyden, G., & Bratton, M. (ed.), *Governance and Politics in Africa*, Boulder et Londres, Lynne Rienner, 1992, p.203

⁴⁹ quoted in the Times of November 21, 1998

⁵⁰ Mobutu, the former president of Zaire is said to have looted his country to the point of his bankruptcy. His fortune was estimated to be equal to the foreign debt of his country. According to Braeckman, this was the lesson was teaching to Habyarimana the then president of Rwanda. See Braeckman, C., 1994, *op. cit.*, p.102

especially during week-ends. Habyarimana had acquired from Mobutu two immense estates in Zaire: in Masisi Habyarimana's men were grazing cattle on 2,000 hectares; and in Walikale the immense ranch was of the size of 20,000 hectares which 300 engineers, mechanics, and agriculturists had transformed, with the help of sophisticated equipment such as bulldozers and tractors sent from Kigali, this remote part of rural Zaire into an European model ranch.⁵¹

Habyarimana avoided registering his business interests on his own name. He put them in his children's, his wife's and his brothers in-law's names. Braeckman compares what was happening this time to the situation in the Nyiginya ruling class (before and during colonial administration) when the queen-mother's family enjoyed excessive powers. Habyarimana's in-laws got the nickname '*Akazu*' or the 'little house' which had transformed itself into a veritable mafia. This 'little house' was comprised of Agathe Kanziga, the president's wife, Jean Pierre Habyarimana, the president's son, Colonel Elie Sagatwa, private secretary to the president, Protais Zigiranyirazo, the president's brother-in-law. Another brother-in-law headed '*La Centrale*' a private company that had the monopoly of imported food stuff. Pasical Simbikangwa, brother-in-law directed the Intelligence service. Other members of the 'little house' included Michel Bagaragza who, as director of the 'Office du thé' was heavily involved in drug trafficking. He controlled the commerce in fruits, vegetables and dairy products, and the National Office of Tourism.⁵²

Towards the end of the 1980s, the launch of the Structural Adjustment Program by the IMF, which coincided with the collapse of coffee prices on the international markets, demanded strict control of the use of foreign currency held by the government. The 'little house' and their favourites were then confronted with serious financial difficulties. Instead of worrying that public services such as education and health were suffering from the shortage of funding, the 'little house' tried to find alternatives to the way in which they used to get money into their individual accounts.

Alternatives were found in the export of cannabis and in the increase of corruption. In 1989 the 'little house' embarked on an ambitious but risky project of planting cannabis bushes in the middle of the Nyungwe natural forest on an estate of 150

⁵¹ Braeckman, C., 1994, *op.cit.*, p.103

⁵² *ibid.* p.104

hectares.⁵³ This drug, more profitable than coffee and tea could be easily disguised in coffee bags at the time of export. One bottle of cannabis cost 100,000 FRW (£400 of the time in Rwanda) and ten times more in Nairobi.⁵⁴ Cannabis exports were made easy by the fact that operations were in the hands of a cousin of the president, thus a member of the 'little house'.

The best agriculturists were hired and taken in the forest during the night to work in the cannabis plantation. In fact, when the plantation was discovered, not only were people surprised by its size but also by its professional management. When Major Emmanuel, who used to fly an helicopter over the forest on the 'mission de reconnaissance' discovered the plantation and made public his report, he was then moved to other responsibilities within the army. The mastermind of this project, Protais Zigiranyirazo, the brother-in-law of the president remained immune to any prosecution while some innocent men were being rounded up for minor links with the project. The mayor of Gikongoro (the prefecture in which the plantation was) who himself led the destruction of the cannabis plantation was sacked and this was interpreted as a punishment for having destroyed that what constituted a source of wealth for the regime.⁵⁵

When the business of drug trafficking was destroyed, the 'little house' turned towards the mountain gorillas in the Virunga Park. Again it was the same Protais Zigiranyirazo who was responsible for kidnapping the gorillas and was selling them for \$20,000 each.⁵⁶ In fact, in Ruhengeri prefecture where Zigiranyirazo worked as the mayor, the traffic of gorillas was so common that one of his subjects said: "no one really thinks that gorilla trafficking is a crime. It was a way of making money, making the most out of what was in short supply".⁵⁷ But Zigiranyirazo was confronted with the determination of Diane Fossey, the American zoologist who had decided to spend part of her life protecting the gorillas. Later on she became an obstacle to the members of the 'little house' that had found dealings with gorillas to be a profitable business. They had her assassinated and all the subsequent

⁵³ I was minister of a parish situated next to the Nyungwe natural forest where the project was carried out. I remember having seen local businessmen being taken to prison on charges of drug trafficking.

⁵⁴ Braeckman, C., 1994, *op.cit.*, p.106

⁵⁵ Nsanzuwera, F.X., *La magistrature rwandaise dans l'état du pouvoir exécutif. La peur et le silence; complices de l'arbitraire*, Kigali: CLADHO, 1993, p.115

⁵⁶ Braeckman, C. *op.cit.*, p.107. see also Gordon, N., *Murders in the Mist: Who killed Diane Fossey?*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1993, p.286 (Gordon gives lower prices than those of Braeckman)

⁵⁷ Gordon, N., *op.cit.*, p.288

investigations remained inconclusive.⁵⁸ Gordon has documented a detailed account of the network that dealt in gorilla trafficking. He noted that it was the president's wife, Agathe, who masterminded the assassination. She asked her brother Zigiranyirazo, with whom she shared the profits of that business, to organise the killing, after which all members of the team that was used to carry out the task were killed one after another. These included Colonel Rwanyagasore, Major Haguma, and Kayumba.⁵⁹ Zigiranyirazo was involved in the smuggling of gold.

One of the sources of wealth most exploited by Habyarimana's people was the arms trade. The news was broken in 1992 by a Rwandan journal, *Le Tribun du peuple* which reported that Habyarimana's family was involved in arms trafficking with most countries of the central Africa region. It was colonel Sagatwa, the president's private secretary and brother-in-law, who bought arms from South Africa and sold them in Rwanda and in neighbouring countries especially to Museveni who was till the mid 1980s in the bush waging a war against Milton Obete in Uganda. Museveni had to pay after coming into power. When the Rwandan Patriotic Front attacked Rwanda in 1990, an internal market was found for Habyarimana's people. They made a fortune in weapons trafficking, since 50% of the Rwandan national budget were directed to the army and its equipment. Since the war started in 1990, the Rwandan army, traditionally of modest size, increased from 8,000 to 40,000 troops. The budget of the ministry of defence increased from 3,155 millions of Rwandan Francs in 1990 to 8,885 millions in 1992, an increase of 181% (compared with a 50% of total increase budget). An increase of 105% in public debt (from 6,678 millions in 1990 to 13,702 millions in 1992) was due to military expenditure.⁶⁰

As Braeckman observed, while war victims and displaced Rwandans were being counted in hundreds of thousands, the 'little house' was busy making money.⁶¹ In 1993, when the minister for defence, who did not belong to the 'little house' attempted to break the monopoly of Habyarimana's people to supply military equipment to the armed forces, he nearly lost his life, and fled the country in July 1993.⁶²

⁵⁸ Braeckman, C., 1994, *op.cit.* p.109

⁵⁹ Gordon, N., *op.cit.*, p.326

⁶⁰ Reintjens, F., *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs en Crise (Rwanda, Burundi: 1988-1994)* Karthala, 1994, p.117

⁶¹ Braeckman, C., *op.cit.*, p.111

⁶² James Gasana is the former minister of defence in the Habyarimana government. He fled Rwanda nine months before the 1994 (April) genocide. He is also a canon in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. I use this information with his permission.

It was in this context that the 'little house' developed a triangular class of military-elite-businessmen which accumulated the country's revenues. "Its members accumulated more and more wealth, increasing the gap with the majority of the population particularly peasants and working class."⁶³ Chretien made the observation that in the early 1990s Rwandan society ran after money. Both politicians and military were looking after their own interests.⁶⁴ Senior members of the clergy were attracted by the same spirit. Owning a house in Kigali or a taxi were some of the ambitions shared by the educated clergy. This was also the time when Rwandan ecclesiastical institutions were favoured by Western NGOs already disillusioned by the government's mismanagement. As Gatwa and Karamaga observed, foreign aid given to churches was equally badly managed⁶⁵ and caused the split between church staff that were paid from foreign sources and those who relied on money generated locally. Those (clergy as well as lay people) who worked in church-sponsored development projects being funded from foreign aid were getting double and sometimes triple the salaries their colleagues with the same qualifications but working in other services were getting. Protestant churches were under pressure to increase their revenues in order to support the growing elite of educated clergy who claimed to be entitled to higher salaries than their colleagues of low training. Those who were getting more did not want to get less and those who were getting less were pressing for a salary increase. Protestant church leaders, caught up in the situation themselves, were under intense pressure to find an alternative in order to maintain together a community that was socially falling apart.

The leadership of the Free Methodists had been locked in internal conflicts about the differences between ministers' salaries. The same gap existed among the clergy: between those in rural and urban areas, educated and less educated.

However it is important to note that this triangular class of military-elite-businessmen in which the clergy took part, was not a mono-ethnic group. It cut across the ethnic divide and linked both Hutus and Tutsis of similar economic interests.⁶⁶ Habyarimana (a Hutu and president) had business interests with well

⁶³ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos & Vredeseilanden; *Le Rwanda: Et Maintenant*, Bruxelles, Leuven, 1990, p.12

⁶⁴ Chretien, J.P., *Le Defi de l'Ethnisme: Rwanda et Burundi: 1990-1996*. Paris: Editions Karthala, 1997, p.78

⁶⁵ Gatwa, T. & Karamaga, A., *op.cit.*, p.74

⁶⁶ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos, Vredeseilanden; *op.cit.*, p.12

known Tutsi businessmen like Kajeguhakwa, Majyambere and Rwigara⁶⁷ 'In these circumstances', warned Hart, 'instead of social life being based on a system of mutual forbearances, with force used only intermittently against a minority of malefactors, the only viable system would be one in which the weak submitted to the strong on the best terms they could make and lived under their 'protection'. This, because of the scarcity of resources, would lead to a number of conflicting power centres, each grouped round its strong man'.⁶⁸

This was the situation both the Rwandan elite and the majority of rural Rwandan peasants faced towards the end of the 1980s. In 1990, just before the beginning of the war, it was clear that Rwanda was divided into two communities. There was on the one hand, the political, military-businessmen alliance which crossed ethnic divide and the mass of ordinary Rwandans who lived in poor conditions throughout the countryside. According to some analysts it was this alliance that decided to muddle and confuse the population by finding a scapegoat to blame for the situation, and so the Tutsi community (both inside and outside the country) was made the enemy of the country, *inyangarwanda*, to be hunted down and eliminated. The RPF (the Rwandan Patriotic Front) which was fighting the regime was said to be composed of Tutsi refugees supported by other Tutsis living inside the country. The fact that the population succumbed to this propaganda helped the 'little house' to continue to hide the true problem which was the divisions in and exclusion of the majority of Rwandans, whether Hutus or Tutsis, from socio-economic resources to which they were all entitled. Is not this what Tim Williams said when describing how Third World countries are kept in dire poverty. He contends that a Third World country is

a country whose poverty, repression and murder of the innocent, though actually caused by home-grown incompetence, corruption and despotism, can still be blamed on the West 40 years after independence. It's one where murderous regimes have decade after decade preyed on the flesh of their own children and ransacked their own communities to fund grotesquely extravagant lifestyles and built environmentally disastrous capital projects as monuments to their vanities. It's where man-made famines are caused by élites who have turned bread baskets into baskets cases through stealing land from the peasants and civil wars funded from your taxes. It's where the political class live in the 'First World' of Mercedes cars driven on

⁶⁷ Habyarimana lost most of the assets he held with Majyambere because when they broke ranks in the 1980s, Majyambere went into exile and sold the assets which were registered on his name though belonging to both men.

⁶⁸ Hart, H.L., *The Concept of Law*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, p.194

siphoned-off World Bank money, of Swiss bank accounts financed by grants from the British Department for Overseas Development and charities – because their people live in the ‘Third World’, which is to say Black Africa. That is Hell.⁶⁹

The Rwandan case fits this description. That the Rwandan conflict was above all a conflict between two antagonistic élites in competition for economic resources is not a case to be proved. The way the ruling classes behaved throughout the Rwandan socio-economic history tells it all. There are even questions of whether the current ruling class did not take lessons from the past.⁷⁰

However the ways in which the Rwandan ruling classes accumulated this wealth, particularly from the arms trade, poses many moral and theological questions. First of all, all those involved were known to be members of the Rwandan Christian community. The Nyiginya rulers during the second period of the colonial administration, and the post independence political leaders were all Christians. King Rudahigwa had the influence and education of the White Fathers missionaries. Kayibanda, the president of the newly independent Rwanda, was not only a Christian but personal secretary of Bishop Perraudin before entering into politics. Habyiramana, who took over from Kayibanda in 1973 in military coup, was the son of a Roman Catholic catechist and brought up in the Christian schools. He and his wife had the Roman Catholic Archbishop as their personal confessor. How could the use of weapons, both for defensive and offensive purposes which involve the taking of human lives, the destruction of God’s people, the destruction of communities, be reconciled with their being Christians? How could the diversion of government funds from social spending to unproductive and even destructive military programs be reconciled with love and justice? How could the social exclusion of refugees by fighting them out of their homeland be reconciled with the peace and reconciliation that the Christian gospel requires?

The arms trade involves a huge and international network and requires the international Christian community to be concerned by its working. It involves those who manufacture and sell weapons, as well as the end users who, in most cases, use them for individualistic purposes. In 1996 alone the sale of arms world-wide

⁶⁹ *The Scotsman* of 17 June 1999, p.17

⁷⁰ Very recently, in May 1999, it was reported that 30,000,000 Rwandan Francs simply vanished from the National Bank. When questions were raised as to how such a sum could disappear, those who took it apologised and promised to give it back. Both the crime and attitude to it say much about whether the situation is improving or not.

amounted \$US22,98 billions with a slight decline from the previous year when arms sold amounted to \$US23,19 billions.⁷¹ Most arms and weapons are manufactured in developed countries and exported to Third World countries. The USA come first with \$US10, 23 billions profits with 44 per cent of the world arms market, Russia with \$US4,52 billions, France with \$US2,1 billions, UK comes fourth \$US1,78 billions, Germany with \$US1,47 billions. The list of the ten leading countries in arms' export includes also China (with \$US573 millions), The Netherlands (with \$US450 millions), Sweden (with \$US274 millions), Bielorusse(with \$US190 millions) and Ukraine (with \$US185 millions).⁷²

Some of the churches in the West have substantial sums of money invested in companies that manufacture weapons. A dossier released to *The Independent* of Monday 23 March 1998 listed 16 cathedrals of the Church of England as holding shares worth nearly £30 million in British defence companies including British Aerospace, Vickers and Racal. British Aerospace is Britain's biggest arms company, and producer of Hawk fighter aircraft. It has £307,000 worth of shares from the Choristers' Endowment Fund at Salisbury Cathedral.⁷³ Of the 15 Anglican cathedrals which have shares registered in their name, or in that of their diocesan board of finance, the biggest investors are Oxford-which is managed by the University and has shares worth £1,2m in GEC and GKN- and Lichfield, which holds shares worth £359,000 in Vickers, the firm which produces Challenger tanks.⁷⁴

Arms' manufacturing and trafficking poses serious moral and theological questions. It involves the taking of human lives which in itself is against God's plan for human beings. But for countries that manufacture weapons, this business provides many benefits. It provides employment and public revenues in the form of taxes. War zones such as Rwanda provide testing fields for new weaponry developments. It is even alleged that sometimes Western powers support wars in less developed countries in order to get hold of mineral resources and protect other economic interests in those countries. Kofi Anan (the UN General secretary) in his report observed that "foreign interests continue to play an important role in certain conflicts, rivalries being in oil and other African resources."⁷⁵ To keep the wheels of

⁷¹ Le Monde du Dimanche 29-Lundi 30 Juin 1997. p.5

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ *The Scotsman* of March 8, 1998

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Rapport du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies. Mai 1998.

the arms trade rolling means finding a market, which the Rwandan war and conflicts provided.⁷⁶

The result was the destruction of the Rwanda community as social and political instability and war increased. Even though that war and killings have receded, the Rwandan community has to deal with problems related to land mines, guns in the hands of civilians, death and killings, orphans and widows, famine, hatred, psychological and physical wounds, diseases and poverty. In fact the UN General Secretary's report of May 1998 reveals that in 1996 alone, 14 out of 53 African countries witnessed armed conflicts and that since 1970, there has been on the African continent more than 30 wars which in the majority were internal conflicts. These conflicts were responsible for more than a half of all deaths with more than 8 million refugees or displaced in their own country.⁷⁷

In Rwanda, the issue of arms sales was linked to that of human rights. By diverting its public expenditure from social and agricultural priorities, the ruling class was starving its own people. Furthermore Rwandan soldiers and paramilitary groups committed human rights abuse using these weapons against the very people they were supposed to protect. It was in beginning of the 1990s, when the police and armed forces claimed to be dealing with security problems, that human rights abuse increased. The massacres of civilians in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri in 1991, in Bugesera in March 1992, are among the many examples of human rights abuse before the 1994 genocide, in which weapons were used.⁷⁸ On more than two occasions investigations were carried out by international and impartial observers to establish how far Rwanda had violated the human rights convention but the reaction from the then Rwandan government was to reject the report of the investigation team.⁷⁹

Another moral question is the involvement of children in these armed conflicts. According to the *Independent*, "as many as 300,000 children, some as young as eight, are in active combat around the world in government forces or armed rebel

⁷⁶ Since October 1990 Rwanda has been plunged into a war that involved sophisticated technological weapons. Towards the end 1996, the story came out that a British company (based on the Isle of Man) was involved in supplying armaments to one of the warring groups. The British government has ordered a thorough enquiry into the allegations. The rocket that was used to bring down the plane in which the two presidents were travelling on the night that triggered the start of the genocide to start, was manufactured in France.

⁷⁷ Rapport du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies. Mai 1998

⁷⁸ Nsanzuwera F.X., *op.cit.*, pp.74/75

⁷⁹ Ibid. pp.95-101

groups”.⁸⁰ Rwanda has been one of the most frequently cited countries where children have been used in fighting. Children as young as 13 known as the ‘kadogo’, ‘gamins’ were used by RPF in its four year war against the Rwandan government. Although the Rwandan government recruitment age for the army was officially 18, it cannot be ruled out that that principle was broken when it increased its troops from 5,000 to 40,000 within weeks. In addition, political party recruitment for militias did not have any age limit below which they should not go. According to human rights groups, areas where the numbers of children in armed rebel groups are increasing at an alarming rate include the Great Lake Region in which “thousands of young children are being killed, maimed, and psychologically scarred”.⁸¹ On Monday 7 December 1998, it was reported that rebels and allied forces from Rwanda had recruited 12,600 new fighters among whom teenagers were the majority. These new recruits were given a three months military training after which they were sent to the front of any battlefield.⁸²

6.4. Rich towns versus poor countryside

The character of Rwandan cities and towns tells something about the spiritual health of the Rwandan Christian community. The Bible presents us with two models of cities: The city which is the product of human fear, arrogance and sin, like the city of Babel and the city Cain’s descendants built; and the City of God as depicted in Revelation 21:2. Haan contrasts the city of the kind of Babel or Cain’s city, with the city in which God’s justice reigns. He notes that it was with the fear of Cain that the city made its appearance in the Bible. It was a city built on distrust and eternal delusion which told its own creation story in an attempt to recover what humanity itself had destroyed. After Cain had killed his brother and received the punishment, he withdrew from the presence of God. He decided to make his own new beginning. He begot a son and built a city. Negating both his condition as stranger and the judgement which such a condition had brought upon him, he wanted to ensure his own future through his progeny and through his own economic and military security system: the city. Haan interpreted Cain’s project of building a city as an attempt to find an answer to his economic problem (the earth would no longer yield up its full strength) and his military problem (whoever finds me will slay me).⁸³

⁸⁰ The *Independent* of Sunday 6 December 1998. See also *Dialogue* no 208, Janvier-Fevrier, 1999, p. 133

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² Extracts from an interview by Agence France Press of Saturday, 5 December 1998

⁸³ Haan, R., *op.cit.*, p.20

The same evil motivated the building of Babel. It was an economic organization which was based on the labour of slaves who had been seized as spoils of war and from the ranks of oppressed peasants. As it wanted to make a name for itself, its aim was to construct its own truth. It was a city without God.⁸⁴ Pitzele also echoed the same point that the problem with the city of Babel was that it was a city in which God was absent. Whole nations – in their tribes and clans – came together on their own, sharing a common language. Through the assembled crowd no mention is made of God. “Through this absence Genesis suggests that God is once again forgotten, reconsigned to his heavenly loneliness, watching the linear history of humankind move without thought of Him to its own appointed ends”.⁸⁵ They decided to found a city with a tower that is to ‘reach heaven’ just to make a name for themselves. God not being happy with such human arrogance put a halt to the initiative. The building of the city of Babel ended with God’s direct intervention and disaster⁸⁶. Was God angry for being excluded from human projects? Bauckham and Hart note that the story of the tower of Babel represents ‘the artificial cosmic mountain built by humans in their attempt to storm heaven and rival God’.⁸⁷ God does not accept that human glory takes precedence over his.

As Pitzele observed, Babel raises the question of the quality and intention behind human gathering. It is presented as a community which has degenerated into statism and God was not in it. There was fellowship with one another but it was a fellowship in which God was absent. The motive of the Babel project tells it all: to make a name for themselves: ‘a raid on heaven itself’, ‘an affront to God’ and a threat to human thriving’.⁸⁸ The community was dismantled, the city was demolished and the people scattered. The account points to the fact that human beings will find their relationship to God only when they are aware of their dependency and open to his presence.⁸⁹ For Yoder, the meaning of Babel is an effort of a human community to absolutise itself, a centralised and powerful city: ‘it was rebellious humankind, proud and perhaps

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.26

⁸⁵ Pitzele, P., *op.cit.*, p.73

⁸⁶ Ibid. p.71

⁸⁷ Bauckham, R. & Hart, T., *Hope against Hope: Christian Eschatology in Contemporary Context*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999, p.150

⁸⁸ Braaten, C., & Jenson, R.W., *The Two Cities of God: The Church’s Responsibility for the Earthly City*, Michigan:Grand Rapids, 1997, p.20

⁸⁹ Pitzele, P., *op.cit.*, 78

fearful, who wanted to live all in one place and thereby replace their dependence on divine benevolence by reaching heaven on their own.⁹⁰

In the ancient world, the ideal city was centered on the immediate presence of the gods. In the cities of the Mesopotamian plain artificial mountains, ziggurats, functioned as the home of the gods among humans. From this Bauckham and Hart suggest that the center of the city may not be the presence of God, but idolatry and human self-deification.⁹¹ They also note that can be places where power and profit, militarism and growth are the patron deities.⁹² Solomon, for instance, took seven years to build the Temple, but set aside thirteen years to build his own palace complex, with the government buildings and the villa for his Egyptian wife. Solomon's addiction to the building of cities is shown by the fact that his program began with the repair of the city of Gezer, a dowry which the king of Egypt gave to his daughter, Solomon's bride.⁹³ According to Duchrow, most of the early cities lived from imposed tribute on the agricultural areas around them. They were distinguished by a very marked division of labour in society and consequent stratification into hierarchical social classes.⁹⁴

The City of God as presented in Revelation 21:2 symbolizes the place where the Lord God chooses to live, the city of peace.⁹⁵ To introduce his book *The City of God*, Augustine cites three passages, all from the Psalms: 'Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God' (Ps.87:3); 'Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God' (ps.48:1); and 'There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved' (Ps.46:4-5).⁹⁶ The holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven'. For Augustine, this parallels the company of men and women united in their love of God, living in peace and justice, and without discord or fear or danger.⁹⁷ By making this priority, a new vision of the city can emerge. A vision of cities not as mere celebration of creativity, or as the glorification of the powers of human craft and art to create and recreate order, grace, beauty and wonder in the physical shape of concentrated human settlement, but a new vision of the city which would be

⁹⁰ Yoder, J.H., *For The Nations: Essays Public & Evangelical*, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997, p.62

⁹¹ Bauckham, R.& Hart, T., *op.cit.*, p.151

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ Haan, R., *op.cit.*, p.28

⁹⁴ Duchrow, U., *op.cit.*, 1995, p.136

⁹⁵ Haan, R., *op. cit.*, p.29

⁹⁶ Quoted in Braaten, C., & Jenson, R.W., *op.cit.*, pp.30/31

⁹⁷ Augustine, *City of God*, 19.14

associated with a more social understanding of God. The Biblical view of the city both acknowledges the evil which can be present in it in it, and to catch and strengthen the vision of the City of God.

For Saint Augustine, the people who live in the City of God or celestial city base their lives on the principle of humility and hope in God by the love which God himself has inspired in human beings. There is an immediate participation in god himself, his goodness, his eternal life and felicity. It represents a society of perfect justice in which justice is the unchanging truth'. This is a model of the possibility of the human society. He contrasts the celestial city with the 'diabolic city', 'terrestrial city' or the 'earthly city' whose members seek the peace and harmony of life in trying perversely to imitate God by subjugating their equals under the rule of dominion of this world.⁹⁸ Although Augustine presents the two cities as opposite and ruled by two different masters: one by the Christ and the other by the devil, governed by different loves

There are, then, two loves, of which one is holy, the other unclean; one turned towards the neighbor, the other centered on self; one looking to the common good, keeping in view the society of saints in heaven, the other bringing the common good under its own power, arrogantly looking to domination; one subject to God, the other rivaling him; one tranquil, the other tempestuous; one peaceful, the other seditious; one preferring truth to false praise, the other eager for praise of any sort; one friendly, the other envious; one wishing for its neighbor what it wishes for itself, the other seeking to subject its neighbor to itself; one looking for its neighbor's advantage in ruling its neighbor, the other looking for its own advantage. These two loves started among the angels, one love in the good angels, the other in the bad; and they have marked the limits of the two cities established among men under the sublime and wonderful providence of God, who administers and orders all that he creates; and one city of the just, and the other city is the city of the wicked. With these two cities intermingled to a certain extent in time, the world moves on until they will be separated at the last judgement.⁹⁹

Augustine also acknowledges that the two cities are intermingled and interrelated in the sense that they are both afflicted by the adversities of this temporal life and that

⁹⁸ Although Augustine uses 'city' in reference to good society where God reigns and bad society where evil reigns, the term is used in this section in reference to the people dwelling in modern cities.

⁹⁹ De Genesi ad litteram XI, 15 (20)CSEL 28.1, 347:27-348:15. Quotation translated by John Hammond Taylor in Ruokanen M., *Theology of Social Life in Augustine's De civitate Dei*, Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993, p.80

the terrestrial city can both be the 'hostile presence to the divine truth' or the 'symbolic presentation of the heavenly city: 'one part of the earthly has been made into an image of the heavenly city, by symbolizing something other than itself, namely that other city; and for that reason it is a servant. Thus we find in the earthly city a double significance: in one respect it displays its own presence, and in the other it serves by its presence to signify the heavenly city.'¹⁰⁰

It is this double significance that encapsulates both the nature of the life in cities and its vocation. Augustine's theological analysis of the nature of the two cities serves as foundations of the social and community life of human beings here and now. It points to the vocation of the earthly city to symbolize the heavenly city, the redeemed society, *civitas Dei*, the *koinonia* that is to be lived in modern cities as well. It presents also a vision of hope in this world of violence, exclusion and misery.

Cities can contribute to the well-being of those who live within them and those outside them, just as they can create problems within and outside them. As an organization of crafts and manufactures for the embellishment of temples, public buildings and households, the building of a city can be a good collective expression of human creativity, a continuation of God's act of creation. Cities can enhance human community, and are needed for physical security and defence.¹⁰¹ As in the case of Nehemiah, the building of a city can aim at the glorification of God and the revival of the worship of God. This is the city in which God's plan is executed, His love put into action.¹⁰²

However, cities can also constitute that insatiable monster that continually draws resources from the countryside. "The city requires immense resources to come into being. The simplest city still draws to it the variety of people who built it, service it, profit from it. The city is not just a mass of people living together, nor is it a failed monastery. It is inextricably linked with money and power, and those elements will always be found in great concentration within its walls"¹⁰³. In the city, more than in the country, the common good is likely to be threatened by self-interest and individualism. fellowship and communality are continually threatened by

¹⁰⁰ Augustine quoted in Ruokanen M., *op.cit.*, p.91

¹⁰¹ Northcott, M., *op.cit.*, p.32

¹⁰² Shepperd, D., *Built as a City – God and the Urban World Today*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974, p.25

¹⁰³ Northcott, M., *op.cit.*, p.20

egocentricity. For many city-dwellers, life is too busy for either getting to know their neighbours, or for meeting in community groups. They take refuge in anonymity which rescues them from the village life where everyone knows who is who and who does what. They can be themselves and choose what relationships they develop, rather than have them forced on them by the lottery of who their next door neighbours are.¹⁰⁴

It is this ambivalence of city life that makes it difficult for the Christian community to formulate a Christian attitude which helps to build a good community; to build a city or town in which God is honored through the recognition and respect of all members of the *koinonia*. It is against these two aspects of urban life that the growing towns of Rwanda and the spiritual life in them can be analyzed. Although there are not many towns in Rwanda that could be called a city, the way the few towns which are there have been developed in comparison with the countryside raises theological and ethical questions.

The split between Rwandan towns and the countryside originated in colonial times.¹⁰⁵ Some began as trading or administrative centers. Serving as the seats of colonial administration, they were parasitic from their conception, where tribute was exacted from subject peoples and conspicuous consumption took place. Others grew organically from the communities of which they were part. But Europeans transformed their nature and face as they tried to transplant the European colonial city into the remote lands of Rwanda. Harrison, writing about the Third World countries in general, noted: "Utterly convinced of the superiority of their own culture, they built themselves models of their cities back home. ... It was alien and uncompromising, the visible focus of a culture that was equally unwilling to compromise".¹⁰⁶ It was like two countries in one. The ways of life in the towns were different from those in the villages so that for Rwandans going to visit the city was like a visit to one of the European countries. Kigali, the capital has always been jealously guarded by police against the undesirable migrants from rural areas.¹⁰⁷

City life in its nature and conception soon became attractive to country people. But, as in many African colonies, natives, although needed for the survival of the city,

¹⁰⁴ Shepperd, D., *op.cit.*, p.18

¹⁰⁵ Willame, J.C., *op.cit.*, p.151

¹⁰⁶ Harrison. P., *Inside the Third World: The classic account of poverty in the developing countries*, England: Penguin, 1980, p.158

¹⁰⁷ Willame, J.C., *op.cit.*, p.151

were not completely integrated into its life. The city also became divided into separate districts: natives needed as porters or tea boys or junior clerks did not have to live in the same conditions as the Europeans: thus the colonial city developed around itself a border of native huts.¹⁰⁸ This process resulted into what came to be known as the 'dual city': the local ruling class and their European masters on one side, and the urban poor on the other. As Gandhi noted, it is the former who always dominated and drained the villages, transforming them into crumbling ruins.¹⁰⁹ They live off supplies extracted from the countryside.

The parasitic character of Rwandan cities persisted during the last three decades. The central areas of these cities are almost indistinguishable, apart from the beggars, from their modern western counterpart, ranging from Kigali's giant monuments, multi-storey buildings of hostels and banks, to fashionable residential suburbs in Kakiru and Remera. But these are like small islands set in a sea of misery and poverty comparable to the urban ghettos of Camp Zaire, Kimicanga, and Muhima occupied by the poor of the city, the excluded, locally known as 'utujagari' or 'squatter camps'.¹¹⁰ In fact in 1985/86, 4/5 of the population living in the capital Kigali were concentrated in these 'utujagari'.¹¹¹

Furthermore, most economic activity occurs in one place: the capital, Kigali; and to a lesser extent in Butare and Gisenyi. But Kigali alone as the capital of Rwanda is a boom city doubling in size every seven years.¹¹² Life in all the eleven prefecture headquarters had all the requirements for a modern city of Europe: Electricity, clean water, telephone, good housing and good roads. The urban bias of investment was also a stamp on the Rwandan society. Few of the schools, clinics, roads and sewers with which the modern sector was so well provided were located in rural areas which remained under-provided and discriminated against, in relation to the cities.¹¹³

Productive activities in rural areas tend to have poor trading terms— that is their produce fetches excessively low prices compared to the cost of the cities' products. For Harrison this happens because the rural poor lack the muscle of organization and coordination with which to extract higher prices and because public and private

¹⁰⁸ Harrison, P., *op.cit.*, p.159

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Harrison, P., *op.cit.*, p.158

¹¹⁰ Willame, J.C., *Aux Sources de l'Hécatombe Rwandaise*, Brussel: L'Harmattan, 1995, p.152

¹¹¹ Bourdon D., & Ngango, F., 'Urbanisation et équité Sociale' in *Dialogue* no 126, janvier-fevrier 1988; See also Willame, *op.cit.*, p.152

¹¹² Waller, D., *op.cit.*, p.31

¹¹³ See Document du programme d'Adjustement Structurel, 1991

institutions in cities increase the incomes of their employees at the expense of the rural population.¹¹⁴ This is true in the case of Rwanda where in 1991, for example, the government was the biggest employer with about 7,000 people in the central administration, about 43,000 in the communes, and about 35,000 in the army. The salaries of the 7,000 in the central administration based in Kigali, represent 45 per cent of the operating budget of the central government.¹¹⁵ As Waller remarked, much of the money that was spent in towns came from foreign aid and loans that had to be repaid with foreign exchange, and that was usually obtained by exporting the rural farmers' produce. As much as 80 per cent of the aid is spent on salaries and infrastructure which tend to enhance the economy of Kigali, while the trickle-down effect into the rural economy has been slight. As Gatwa and Karamaga observed most of the foreign aid was appropriated by a minority of foreign experts and the Rwandan elite most of whom live in cities.¹¹⁶ In this way the farmers bear the cost, city dwellers reap the benefits.¹¹⁷ It was the danger of destroying the rural community that caused the former president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, to warn that the worst that can happen to any country would be for the town dwellers to exploit the rural peasants.¹¹⁸

Nyerere's prophetic words became a reality for Rwanda. Kigali (the capital city) with a population of 200,000 (5% of the country's population) in 1990, held 50% of the national income in monetary terms.¹¹⁹ Although rural housing conditions and their overall socio-economic situation (roads and school infrastructure) had improved in the 1980s, the low level of income and the persistent economic crisis prevented those living in the countryside from having access to basic needs such as food, clean water and education for their children and adequate clothing. Gatanazi noted that the situation in towns compared to that of the countryside constituted an element of attraction not only for young folk but also for adults who could not get work in rural areas.¹²⁰ However, the town-country divide cut across ethnic boundaries; there were both Hutus and Tutsis together in communities in urban and rural areas, each equally touched by poverty in the countryside, but equally they benefited, as separate ethnic

¹¹⁴ Harrison, P., *op.cit.*, p.159

¹¹⁵ 'Document Préparatoire à la Table Ronde des Bailleurs de Fonds', Ministère du Plan, Kigali, 1991, p.25

¹¹⁶ Gatwa, T. & Karamaga, A., *op.cit.*, p.91.

¹¹⁷ Waller, D., *op.cit.*, p.32

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Harrison, P., *op.cit.*, p.149

¹¹⁹ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos & Vredeseilanden, *op.cit.*, p.27

¹²⁰ *Compte rendu des travaux du premier séminaire des responsables des projets en faveur de la jeunesse*, Kigali, 1975.

groups, by the situation in towns.¹²¹ This issue was high on the agenda of a conference held by those responsible for different projects promoting the employment and well being of Rwandan youth in 1975.¹²² This conference noted that one of the factors underlying the gap between towns and countryside was the inequality in income. In 1975 for instance, a non-qualified worker earned an average of 15FRw per day in the countryside against 45 FRw in urban areas.¹²³ The table¹²⁴ below shows the income disparities between towns and the countryside.

Table 7: Income disparities between towns and countryside

Category	Annual revenue (average in FRW)	Coefficient of disparity of income town/rural	Coefficient of wealth accumulation or pauperization
	Rural Town		Rural Town
Manoeuvre	4500 12000	2.7	-0.1 1.6
Domestic	1200 7200	6.0	-0.8 0.6
Watchmen	2400 15600	6.5	-0.5 2.4

All the workers included in the above table are non-qualified; those who work in towns come from the countryside leaving behind families on a temporary basis. The coefficient of disparities allows the position of a rural man to be seen in comparison to his urban counterpart. Cities were thus economically attractive and many young men and adults have responded to that attraction. In addition “cities present a world of cultural and economic innovations: it is from there that one can negotiate a loan, a trip abroad, etc... Infrastructures are relatively better developed than in the countryside (for example, more than 60% of Rwandan physicians are based in Kigali and Butare), leisure is varied there.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Coopibo, Fos, Ncos & Vredeseilanden, *op.cit.*, p.12
¹²² *Compte rendu des travaux du premier seminaire des responsables des projets en faveur de la jeunesse*, Kigali, 1975.
¹²³ Gatera, M., 1997, *op.cit.*, p.270
¹²⁴ Source: Gatanazi, A.N., ‘Les causes d’exode rural au Rwanda’ in *Compte rendu des travaux du premier seminaire National des responsables des projets en faveur de la jeunesse*, Kigali, 1975, p.47
¹²⁵ Willame, J.C., *op.cit.*, p.15

Disparities in food prices have been observed between city and countryside; the further from the town, the higher the price.¹²⁶ As the table below shows, sometimes these disparities reached alarming proportions:

Table 8: Disparities in commodity prices between city and countryside

Item	Price in towns	Price in rural areas
White beans	88 RWF per kg	30 RWF per kg
Green beans	174	39
Green peas	119	39
Potatoes	16	10
Sorghum flour	51	32
Ugari flour	55	24
Bananas	24	10
Goat meat	450	150
Pork meat	450	125
Smoked fish	276	150

Source: *Ministere du plan, ‘Bulletin de statistique’, Octobre 1987, pp.14-16*

It is the rural Rwandans who are the losers in this trade. City traders get these food stuffs from the farmers at competitive prices, which are still very low compared to what they cost once carried to the city. With this money farmers are not able to buy the imported tools they need to continue their farming activities. In addition those in the countryside who need to buy food in order to supplement their own production or just in case their crop failed, would find it difficult to compete with the city traders.

As result, gradually the link between the city and the countryside which had constituted an important equilibrium and cohesion was broken. This split between the urban minority and the rural majority was almost complete by the 1990s. City dwellers and rural people lived in two different worlds, with the former trying to protect themselves and build boundaries around the city walls. In 1990s 1,5 millions Rwandans living in rural areas of the prefectures of Butare, Gikongoro, Cynagugu, Kibuye and Gitarama faced starvation. But it took months for two foreign and one Rwandan Non Governmental Organisations to produce a video-cassette about the famine zone with witness accounts to convince government officials about the gravity of the problem.¹²⁷ This shows how remote those living in the towns were from their fellows living in the countryside. Although the victims of the failure of

¹²⁶ Willame, J.C., *op.cit.*, p.147

¹²⁷ Gatwa, T. & Karamaga A., *op.cit.*, p.91

urban bias and of its attitude of exclusion towards the poor was felt both in rural and urban areas¹²⁸, the countryside suffered much more than the towns.

Eventually the process of migration that goes with these urban–rural inequalities becomes a danger threatening both the urban and rural communities. As manpower is daily drained from the countryside to the cities, this migration begets and perpetuates inequalities between richer capital-controlling areas and poor capital-dependent areas.¹²⁹ The whole process results in such total disorder that planners cannot cope.

The young and poor in the countryside react by voting with their feet, a kind of “demanding a seat at the table where the feasting is going on”. The flood of immigrants bursts all the barriers of planning and legislation. They ask no one’s consent to come, they just arrive. They do not ask official permission to knock up a ramshackle home to live in or let out, they just get on with it. They go because the countryside is empty, development is uneven and benefits of growth are so unevenly spread. It is a protest against inequality. With this, the rural areas lose their brightest and best, the most educated, progressive, adaptable, young and vigorous elements to the cities (village communities are short of schools, health and roads – and so they are short of jobs as teachers, nurses, engineers, and so forth, who dream about moving into the city where life is easy). The typical migrant is aged between twenty-five and forty.¹³⁰

Indeed as the Rwandan youth flooded into Kigali and other towns, village communities were left with fewer breadwinners to support the children and old people, despite their investments in bearing the cost of raising people to working age; while city dwellers reaped the benefits.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter offered a critical look at the inner urban – suburb, urban-rural relationship in which it is shown that God would not rejoice with the rich and elite living in the cities, but would point to the reality of the exclusion of both the urban and especially the rural poor who are exploited and marginalized.

¹²⁸ *ibid*

¹²⁹ Jacques, A., *The Stranger Within Your Gates – Uprooted People in the world today*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986, p.51

¹³⁰ Harrison, P., *op.cit.*, p.150

One of the Rwandan social evils was the way in which a small group accumulated what God has given to every member of the Rwandan community. This chapter has highlighted the depth of this problem which ruined the community. The ruling class (both political and religious) that was responsible for this failed both the community and God. Equally the urban Christian community failed God and the rural poor. But the consequences of this failure touched everybody. The subsequent disintegration and polarisation of the community were disastrous as the traditional internal relationships of exchanging goods – material or token – were replaced by a series of unrelated links between the powerless and weak members of the society and the centres of society. As Cosmao noted, whenever the structures that hold people together as systems of relationships among groups collapse people are transformed into derelicts.¹³¹

There were three possible outcomes: either the ruling clique could share its existing privileges more equitably with other members of the community¹³², face an organised civil war¹³³, or fight to preserve its privileges. Unfortunately, it was this last that happened: the ruling class fought to preserve its privileges. This inevitably led to civil war since the strategy of scapegoating was used to divert popular discontent from social and economic exclusion towards a ill-defined category of Rwandans. The Rwandan conflict was thus a defence of privilege and economic interests; the state and the church leadership being the true focus of the economic struggle in Rwanda.

God's plan for Rwandans needs to be clearly reiterated among Rwandans: that God's love and justice are gifts to all the sections of the community and that every Christian as well as the religious and the political leaders is invited to get involved in the process of re-building a new community based on the principle of *koinonia*. Love of God and of the neighbour as well as social justice would be needed to shape any practical action that goes with that renewal of the community.

¹³¹ Cosmao, Vincent, 'The Church and Aid to Developing Countries, in *Concilium : The Finances of the Church*, by Bassett, W. & Huizing, P. (ed.) New York: The Seabury Press. (1979 p.65

¹³² African Rights, *op.cit.*, p.22

¹³³ Gatwa. T. & Karamaga, A., *op.cit.*, . p.74

CHAPTER SEVEN:

WORKING FOR RECONCILIATION, PEACE AND JUSTICE

7.1. Introduction

The last chapters analysed the socio-economic factors that contributed to the breakdown of the Rwandan community. This task was important because for the healing of the Rwandan Christian community, it is important that it should continue to look back at its sad experience and contrast it with the meaning of being God's people. In our analysis of the Rwandan situation the reality of what went wrong was contrasted with what is believed to be the ideal of community life God wants his people to live. Not only does this ideal offer Rwandan Christians and Christians as a world-wide community a reference beyond their human weaknesses, but also presents the hope that in the power and presence of God something can be done to avoid and address the wrongs of the past.

This chapter highlights some of the initiatives that have been taken towards peace, justice and reconciliation. It is also a reaffirmation of hope that God is not sitting back, wringing his holy hands in despair; but that he is involved in the work of transforming the whole history of Rwanda, 'bringing hope and new life out of seeming disaster.'¹ It reiterates the Christian responsibility in the building of a community that practices peace, justice and reconciliation.

This chapter, then, attempts to offer practical approaches for action that might help Rwandan Christians in their efforts to recover from the genocide and its consequences. However what this chapter offers is not a blue-print of the kind of *koinonia* Rwandan Christian need to engineer, but beginnings and possibilities which may contribute to the renewal of a community already so much damaged by divisions, hatred and denial of each other's space, and permanently threatened by them.

7.2. For Forgiveness and Reconciliation

For many years in Rwanda, ethnic identities and regionalism have been channels for hatred, violence and killings. The community has been shaped by its memories. How

¹ Bilinda, L., *op.cit.*, p.218

can the rights of the 'other' be restored in this fragmented community? How can the Rwandan community assume its responsibility and learn from its past mistakes and emerge from today's hostilities? How may the hurtful memories and the root cause of fear in all social groups of the Rwandan community be addressed? These are questions to be answered.

When violence damages relationships within communities, people react differently. Some choose to retaliate, while others settle for an avoidance of contact; because for them peace means the absence of conflict and of confrontation. But as Puls argues, 'avoiding contact or conflict will never remove the haunting summons to confess and convert'.² This is why the wisest way forward is to restore the relationship to its initial situation before things went wrong. In order to bring this about a number of things must be done. The initial step involves admitting the mistakes and sins that have been committed, recognising that at a certain point in the community life communication became strained, that spontaneity got lost and that trust was so eroded that relationships disintegrated.

(i)*Repentance*. If someone acknowledges the sin but does nothing about it, it makes no difference. Repentance is the necessary step toward the restoration of relationship. It points to the remorse of the offender, the genuine willingness to make amends and the determination not to commit the sin again.³ By repentance the sin and weakness of the offender are exposed and transformed. As Puls notes, 'where reconciliation occurs, repentance leads the way'. For her, repentance is the power that breaks a deadlock, and because reconciliation is a renewal of life, the inability to repent is a refusal of life.⁴ (ii)*Forgiveness*. Since an offence or crime weighs on the offender's head, forgiveness means that the weight is removed. It means that the victim will not hit back in vengeance nor will keep hatred within him or herself. As Neil noted, it is a 'let-go' of the burden and resentment against the wrongdoer.⁵ (iii)*Reconciliation*. Derived from the Latin, reconciliation means 'to come together' 'to assemble', 'to walk together' or an act by which people who have been apart and split-off from one another begin to move on in company.⁶ However, as Hezekias pointed out, the concept of reconciliation contains many aspects: reconciliation with God, reconciliation with the self, reconciliation with one's neighbours and the human

² Puls, J., *Hearts set on the Pilgrimage*, London: Lamp Press, 1989, p.67

³ Tournier, P., *The Violence Inside*, London: 1977, p.67

⁴ Puls, J., *op.cit.*, pp.67-69

⁵ Neil, S., *A Genuinely Human Existence*, London: 1959, p.211

⁶ Nelson, J.O., *Dare to reconcile: Seven settings for Creative Community*, New York: 1969, p.16

community at large, and reconciliation with nature.⁷ It is when these internal and external conflicts are solved through repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation that tranquillity, peace and harmony can reappear in the community. Unfortunately, as Volf noted, 'along with new understandings and peace agreements new conflicts and disagreements are permanently generated'. He then suggests a helpful distinction between the 'final' reconciliation and the 'nonfinal' reconciliation. The latter is based on a vision of reconciliation that is recognised as provisional. For him the 'nonfinal' reconciliation in the midst of the struggle against oppression is what a responsible theology must be designed to facilitate; while maintaining hope for the final reconciliation.⁸ These two aspects of reconciliation are crucial for any Christian project for peace, justice and reconciliation. They help to avoid any seductive illusion that total peace and justice and reconciliation are possible under the current situation. But they are enough to keep Christians at work for an ideal of *koinonia* where peace, justice, love and equality are possible. Repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation which are needed in Rwanda are pre-requisite conditions toward peace and justice. They constitute an important imperative if the Rwandan community is to be renewed and there are signs of hope as many Rwandans are becoming more and more aware of the necessity of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation as the indispensable condition for peace and justice in Rwanda.

In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide various initiatives have been made towards the renewal of the Rwandan Christian community. There has been individual confession and repentance, forgiveness and even institutional confession. Inside Rwanda, groups of war widows for example have, of their own initiative and without any ethnic discrimination, come together in co-operatives and associations. These new grassroots organisations, if allowed to grow and flourish, can prove crucial in preventing civil war in the future. Being aware of the fact that those in power have traditionally manipulated the 'masses' for their own ends as illustrated in the 1994 tragedy, there is rediscovery at the base of society that collective action can bring about increased security and prosperity and make Rwandans much more aware of the choices open to them as individuals and therefore less willing to be used for political ends.⁹

⁷ Hezekias, A., *Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm. A Philosophy of Peace and its implications on Conflicts, Governance and Economic Growth in Africa*, Nairobi: 1993, p.3

⁸ Volf, M., *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996, pp. 110-112

⁹ Newick Park Initiative (NPI), 'Laying the Foundations for Peaceful Co-operation in Rwanda through Shared Values', March 1996

Most Rwandan churches have made a public confession of their role, or rather the role certain members of the clergy played, in the genocide. With the help of the Newick Park Initiative (NPI) and other Western non-governmental organisations, Rwandan church leaders have been encouraged to take a more central role in promoting reconciliation and social justice. Meetings have been organised in France, Germany, Belgium and Britain which most Church leaders attended.¹⁰ Other initiatives took the form of collective repentance and cut across Christian denominations. There are also formal and informal discussions and meetings bringing together Christians and moderate thinkers on both sides of the ethnic and political divide. They have made it clear that they not only desire dialogue with other groups but also that they share similar concerns and goals for Rwanda. They are striving to re-establish dialogue and build on their shared values and vision in order to work towards peace, justice and reconciliation. The 'Confession of Detmold' is one example. In what Gatwa calls 'Repentance-identification', a group of individual Christians succeeded in pointing to the importance of the responsibility of each Rwandan for creating and sustaining the ethnic and divisive ideology that destroyed the Rwandan community. They urged Rwandan Christians and ecclesiastical institutions¹¹ to come forward and set an example in the areas of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation that would help towards the healing of the community.¹² In this sense reconciliation, a positive response to alienation,¹³ is a break with the past and a hope for a better future. Scrutinising the Hutu-Tutsi divisions, they demonstrated that, as Young puts it, 'the challenge of forming relationships lies in the reconciling of differences'.¹⁴

Their courageous act, as well as being a call to the Rwandan Christian community to repentance, had also the character of affirmation and self-criticism, a summons to faith. The group that signed the document was a genuine parable of a new *koinonia* in the making. In a document that was at once affirming and at the same time shaming, frightening, unsettling, and correcting, they had the courage to name the

¹⁰ Under the auspices of NPI, a conference was organised in Britain in June 1996. Roman Catholic priests, Anglican and other Protestant Church leaders were there together with lay people from different Christian denominations.

¹¹ The Rwandan churches, the Protestant churches in particular, have made public confession and repentance for their involvement in the genocide.

¹² Gatwa T, *op.cit.*, p.308

¹³ McDonald, I.J.H., *Christian Values-Theory and Practice in Christian Ethics Today*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995, p.104

¹⁴ Young, N. J., 'Justice and Reconciliation – Six Views on Northern Ireland' in McDonald, H.I.J., *Christian Values: Theory and Practice In Christian Ethics Today*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995, p.165

unnamed in order to expose the evil that had been committed.¹⁵ It was a radical move towards the 'enemy' before the enemy was recognised.¹⁶ Both Hutus and Tutsis who met in Detmold agreed on two important things. First, that each side had wronged the other, accepted that they must deal with the consequences of the tragedies and asked and forgave each other. Young says that these three steps are of vital importance for any act of reconciliation: 'recognising differences, dealing with any difficulties these may be causing to a lasting relationship; and forgiving any hurt, pain, and bitterness that might have resulted'.¹⁷ Repentance and forgiveness were the first important achievement of this group. In addition, in forgiving each other each other, they affirmed that it is possible to break the vicious circle of violence and confrontation. Gorringer observed that 'it is forgiveness alone which breaks the vicious circle by which disrespect breeds disrespect, and alienation causes alienation'.¹⁸ Forgiveness is also seen by Tillich as the principle which underlies creative justice, and the only way to be re-accepted into the unity to which one belongs.¹⁹

Secondly, they agreed that they had a common enemy. From this realisation they made a common front, identifying themselves with the enemy in order to move towards him. As Kierkegaard rightly observed, this move is the dynamic of the process of reconciliation. Somebody has to make the first move:

Long, long before the enemy thinks of seeking agreement, the loving one is already in agreement with him; and not only that, no, he has gone over to the enemy's side, is fighting for his cause, even if he does not understand it or is unwilling to understand it, he is working here to bring it to an agreement.²⁰

This move can be very costly. 'There has to be a giving out of energy. For the one who makes the first move, there is generally a costly giving away of self.'²¹ This is a

¹⁵ The prophetic character of the document was remarkable for the amount of reaction it raised; some for, others against. Uncompromising, it afflicted those who thought they were in the right; at the same time it comforted the afflicted. Hutus and Tutsis being together, signing a document together, confessing to each other was an address to the Rwandan Christian community to recognise that something went wrong, to keep faith and hope, and to claim that change was possible.

¹⁶ The two dozen Hutus and Tutsis had gone to Detmold to reflect on the Rwandan tragedy and comfort each other had no active participation in the genocide. By identifying themselves with the criminals, they made also a move to share the blame with those who killed, and with the ones who excluded others. They bridged the gap between the guilty and the victims.

¹⁷ Young, N.J., *Op.Cit.*, p. 165

¹⁸ Gorringer, T., *op.cit.*, 1996, p.268

¹⁹ Tillich, P., *Love, Power and Justice*, Oxford, 1954, p.86

²⁰ Kierkegaard, S., *op.cit.*, 1995, p.335

²¹ Sheppard, D., *bias to the poor*, p. 71

paradigm of the suffering love of the divine *koinonia* referred to earlier in chapter one. This second step was difficult for many to grasp, the question being: How can somebody accept the responsibility for sins committed by somebody else and ask forgiveness for them? The concept of 'repentance-identification' took a long time for most people to comprehend. Indeed many Rwandans thought it was an act of weakness and disagreed with its principle or opposed it.²² Yet in the face of increasing criticism, the signatories of the Detmold confession were determined to move forward despite the consequences, criticism and misunderstanding.²³ Their resolve echoed Martin Luther King's words on Capitol Hill two years before he was assassinated:

We will go back and we will continue to suffer, but now we know: we are on the move. Others will be killed, tears will flow, the people will bow down, but we are on the move. We can't vote, we can't govern, we can't determine our own fate, but we are on the move.²⁴

Such confessions, where repentance and forgiveness occur, are important not only in order to upbuild and comfort the community²⁵, but possibly more importantly to bridge the gap, re-establish contacts, listen to each other, grieve together, condemn the evil, reaffirm faith and hope of 'becoming one again in the solidarity of God's love',²⁶ and start the spiritual journey towards each other.²⁷ As Frost memorably puts it, 'If you forgive, often you can free a trapped yesterday and make possible a different tomorrow'. For him a paradigm shift occurs and a new ingredient emerges "whose impact can be not only the changing of perceptions, but rules and regulations too".²⁸ Forgiveness is a prerequisite if Rwandan Christians want a peaceful and just community. Refusal to forgive is destructive. Maybaum argued that the Jewish community that survived the Holocaust ought to forgive and love Germans as God's

²² See *Dialogue* no 201

²³ I personally talked to T. Gatwa and N. Hitimana who participated in the meeting and signed the document.

²⁴ Quoted in Michael, F., *Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen*, London: Longman & Todd, 1999, p.67

²⁵ Barth, K., *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.1, p.129

²⁶ Ucko, H. (ed.), *The Jubilee Challenge – Utopia or Possibility? Jewish and Christian Insights*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997, p.72

²⁷ In the meeting in Detmold, the Group held the Holy Communion and baptised one infant. This was a powerful sign of the possibility of coming together and journeying together towards God in hope and love. According to Cochrane, A.C., in *Eating and Drinking with Jesus: An Ethical and Biblical Inquiry*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974, p.78, this act of sharing the Lord's Supper is rooted in love and hope.

²⁸ Brian Frost quoted in Gorringer, T., *op.cit.*, 1996, p.266

children because hate was self-destructive and it was the Jews, more than others, who needed redemption from hatred.²⁹

The 'Detmold Confession' and other initiatives that took place are signs of hope for the Rwandan community. They are a sign that God is at work and is acting in the Rwandan community bringing healing and restoration of the broken relationship, beginning with the renewal of relationship with God and among those groups which are involved in such initiatives. It is by such act of reconciliation that as Jennings points out, the enmity of humanity towards God is overcome and fellowship with him restored.³⁰ For Barth, in the act of reconciliation God reveals himself as the reconciler. God the creator of the community and its harmony, is the One who is concerned when they are disturbed. God the creator is God the reconciler. He is the God who is involved in an act of renewal, continual renewal to save his people.³¹

Reconciliation makes *koinonia* possible since the renewed fellowship with God, the community reconciled with God, implies renewal of relationship with one another. The Detmold Confession recognises that Rwandans cannot claim to love God while hating their neighbours. Therefore reconciliation with God should move Rwandan Christians to acts of reconciliation with their fellow countrymen who were 'enemies', different because of their ethnic group. *Koinonia* becomes the ideal of reconciliation. The Apostle Paul says that Christians must proclaim the restoration of all things in Christ and therefore the end of divisions and war, and presses them to live reconciled lives (Col.1). Thus through repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation, Rwandan Christians are building peace and seeking justice. But this is a never-ending pursuit. For Jennings, this renewal of fellowship is continually made possible by the presence of the spirit of Christ in the Christian community, which is also the power that leads to acts of repentance and the repeated gift of forgiveness and peace.³²

However, there is always a danger of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation being limited to the spiritual realm. Because the Rwandan Christian community co-operated in the sins of socio-economic exclusion by participation in the system that

²⁹ Maybaum, I., 'God's Providence and the Death Camp' in Cohn-Sherbok, D., *Holocaust Theology*, London: Lamp Press, 1989, p.28

³⁰ Jennings, W. *op.cit.*, p.846

³¹ Young Jin, S., *A Rediscovery of the Significance 'from below' in Karl Barth's Christology*, A PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1996, p.189

³² Jennings, W. on Reconciliation, in *Oecumenical Dictionary*, p.846

favoured exclusions; and by not preventing socio-economic injustices when they could and should have prevented, reconciliation needs to be translated into areas of socio-economic life of the community. This new beginning requires a change in conduct and behaviour towards one another, leading to a situation where Hutus and Tutsis accepted each other as equal members of one community, just as entry into the early Christian community meant that Jew and Gentile, male and female were reconciled not by being homogenized but by accepting each other.³³ Therefore the life of the Christian community should display the proper response of humanity to the work of God; the reality of this reconciliation being not only in the proclamation of the word, but also in public action and day-to-day life. It is the shaping and reshaping of the Christian community, its self-understanding and its service.

The Christian renewal that is required for Rwanda has thus to be reflected in the social life of both individual Christians and churches as institutions. "Churches that issue bold pronouncements about economic justice must be willing to look at economic justice issues within their own institutions."³⁴ The United Church of Christ *Statement of Christian Conviction* offers some criteria against which Christians and churches should judge their socio-economic activities: A just Christian community celebrates and serves the fundamental covenant purpose of human life, which is to love God and neighbour. It gives all persons access to the basic material necessities of life. It builds and enhances human communities of dignity and well-being. It is inclusive, involving all people in responsible, participatory, and economically rewarding activity. It encourages equality of opportunity. It reflects God's passion for the poor and disadvantaged, enhancing the life opportunities of the poor, the weak and groups at the margin of society. It recognises the integrity, fullness, and sacredness of creation. It acknowledges the dignity of human beings as made known in Jesus Christ, and guarantees the basic human rights necessary to maintain the sacredness of individuals. And it requires and promotes international peace and well – being.³⁵ To paraphrase Mugambi, in order to transform the present Rwandan Christian community into a renewed community of the future, what is needed is not only its spiritual revival but also its structural adjustment.³⁶ In the words of José Chpenda, echoed by McCullum, the Rwandan Christian community needs 'a faithful search for new ways, new structures, new concepts and new theologies rather than

³³ Yoder, J.H., *For the Nations: Essays Public & Evangelical*, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997, p.29

³⁴ Blank, M. R., *Do Justice: Linking Christian faith and modern economic life*. Ohio: United Church Press, 1992, p. 107

³⁵ Blank, M. R., *op.cit.*, p. 108

³⁶ Mugambi, J.N.K., *op.cit.*, p.179

mere reforms that will help the church survive for a few more years. ... a return to fundamentals like justice, peace and reconciliation rather than soothing feelings which so often drive humanitarianism.³⁷ Something that calls the Christian community to a different future, something that draws it in a positive direction.³⁸

Therefore Christians should not succumb to the argument that the perfect community of God's people will be possible only in the other world and that Jesus' social teaching presents an impossible ideal. It is true that Niebuhr argues that 'the ethical demands of Jesus are incapable of fulfilment in the present existence of man'; for him they are concerned with 'a transcendent and divine unity of essential reality, and their final fulfilment is possible only when God transmutes the present chaos of this world into its final unity'³⁹. He compares the role of the Christian community to that of the Red Cross: 'The Church is like the Red Cross service in war time. It keeps life from degenerating into a consistent inhumanity, but it does not materially alter the fact of the struggle itself. The Red Cross neither wins the war nor abolishes it'⁴⁰. This attitude allows us to do nothing saying 'this is right in theory but it does not work in practice'. Tillich⁴¹ on the other hand recognises that this contrast between theory and practice is contrived by people who want to escape hard and thorough thinking, though he goes to the other extreme when he says that "there is no true theory which could be wrong" and that if something is wrong in practice it is wrong in theory.

However, despite Niebuhr's pessimistic (some would say realistic) view about the possible success of any collective human endeavour, he does offer a critical exposure of pride and selfishness, sins which have contributed to the break-down of the Rwandan community. This exposure calls for repentance and action by the Rwandan Christian community. It calls for a move from preaching about what should be done, to the practical activity required for the renewal of the community; a move supremely important for Tillich, because like James Stewart he sees it as an indispensable element of the Christian community:

If the Christian message is to make a really decisive impact on the men and women of today, the Church must be prepared not only to preach it in word but to demonstrate in life, not only to proclaim it

³⁷ McCullum, H., *op.cit.*, p.109

³⁸ Holland, J. & Herriot, S.J.P., *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*, Washington: Centre for Concern, 1993, p.90

³⁹ Niebuhr, R., *Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol.2,p.92

⁴⁰ Niebuhr, R., *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic*, 1980, p.89

⁴¹ Tillich, P., *The Shaking of the Foundations*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1948, p.115

from the housetops, but to go down and incarnate it in social action and concern and in a compassion kindled at the flame of the charity of Christ.⁴²

Then the question is how the Rwandan Christian community is to live as a renewed community of God's people. It is in the theological principle of *koinonia*, that the Christian community will understand that its very existence requires the pursuit of patterns of behaviour consonant with the vocation of the Christian community as a people of God. It entails grounding Christian faith and behaviour in a sustained relationship with God which involves shared values and commitments binding people together by a sense of mutuality and inclusiveness. It entails the binding together of Hutus and Tutsis, rural and urban, northern and southern, Catholics and Protestants. It calls for a discipleship that strives towards the design, advocacy, and management of a juster socio-economic structure for the community. Peace and justice are the foundations on which practical actions need to be grounded.

7.3. Arms into ploughshares

Peace is one of the most pressing needs of the world today and of many local communities. The General Assembly of the United Nations has proclaimed the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. This is a visionary programme that calls on all nations and the international community to commit itself to turn away from violence towards peace. It suggests ways in which people can make a difference at a personal, community and political level. These include the respect of the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice; the rejection of violence in all its forms particularly towards the most deprived and vulnerable; sharing with others, putting an end to exclusion, injustice and economic oppression; defending the freedom of expression and cultural diversity, giving preference always to dialogue and listening without engaging in fanaticism, difamation and the rejection of others; and rediscovering solidarity.⁴³

The ideal of the United Nations reflects also that of Old Testament prophets who called Israel as a nation to pursue peace. Micah was one of them. His prophecy can be interpreted as a calling to work for peace in his actual context as well for eschatological peace. In his vision he saw the coming of an age in which fighters

⁴² Quoted in Ibid.

⁴³ United Nations Associations Manifesto 2000 (leaflet)

'will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks'; a time when nations will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore (Micah 4:3). The hunger for peace in Rwanda is constantly felt yet fighting and violence go on.⁴⁴ The path to peace has become a maze through which many stumble and fall. But there is an increasing conviction that although the journey is hard, the rewards are great, for without peace community life becomes impossible.

There are those who think that the demilitarisation of Rwanda is a prerequisite for new socio-economic relations among Rwandans, believing that by spending less on armaments and military training will reverse the appetite for violence. Gasana and Nsengimana argued that if this is not achieved all efforts towards reconciliation will be doomed to failure.⁴⁵ They demand the reduction of armed forces and the abolition of 'ethnic armies', arguing that with ethnic armies, racial groups that are excluded will always prepare resistance, in order to oppose or impose violence. It does not make sense for a poor and overpopulated country to invest in structures of social and economic destruction rather than in social and economic development.⁴⁶ Whilst recognising the right of African states to defend themselves, the UN Secretary General implored them to reduce their weapons expenditure to below 1.5 per cent of their gross domestic product and to vow not to increase their defence budget in the next ten years.⁴⁷ It has been recognised that wars serve some participants well. As it has been shown in chapter six the Rwandan war provided a cover for the smuggling of resources; gave to both national and rebel armies the means to control workers, transport and territories. It was, and still is, a means of getting rich (in trading arms or by fighting as mercenary) or of survival (bands of ill-educated young men recruited into the army or militia organisation made guerrilla warfare a way of life).

In this respect, examples of African countries such as Botswana and Mauritius which have accomplished important human development by not diverting their national resources to the creation of disproportionate armies should serve as a source of inspiration. The initiative has been undertaken with considerable success in

⁴⁴ See for instance the *Economist* of February 26 – March 3rd 2000, p.86

⁴⁵ Gasana, J.K., 1994, 'Le Rwanda doit se démilitariser pour réussir sa démocratisation et sa reconstruction' in *Africa Diaspora* No 3&4, p. 27-29. Same article in *Dialogue* No 178, pp.35-40.

⁴⁶ Gasana, J.K. & Nsengimana, N.*op.cit.*, p.47

⁴⁷ Rapport du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies Mai 1998.

Mozambique where a project of the Christian Council of Mozambique manages the work of literally transforming arms into ploughshares. The project's aim is to create a culture of peace making. Its activities range from direct funding to exchange of tools and equipment for arms. The donations include agricultural tools, sewing machines and bicycles. In one exceptional case, the handing in of a huge arsenal warranted the gift of a tractor to the local community. Weapons collected are transformed into scrap or are used in sculpture by local artists.⁴⁸ A further imaginative move was to encourage children to bring in their warlike toys, such as toy guns or grenades, and to give them in return creative materials such as coloured pencils, and drawing paper, or sports goods such as footballs. This is of great importance because demobilising the army means finding jobs and activities into which they can settle without resentment.⁴⁹ The Church then has its role in encouraging and promoting the policies that favour careful planning and spending on the right things.

Traditionally each Rwandan family had separate barns for each food crop harvested. Knowing that it was not wise to consume all the products right away. They selected the seeds and put them aside for the next farming season and kept the rest for daily consumption. This culture eroded because: the farmers did not have adequate methods to keep the crops in the barns for a long period given the Rwandan climatic conditions, and the chemicals that were used to preserve the harvests were too expensive for the majority of farmers to afford. At times the government authorities intervened to provide common, modern and more appropriate barns for entire villages. But when government spending was being diverted into armaments and corruption and embezzlement developed, this help eventually stopped. The demilitarisation of the country is obviously one of the ways forward towards the establishment of a peaceful community.

In the effort to bring about peace, negotiations and agreements are among the best options. The settlement of conflicts by these means is not only sensible but cheap, though military people often regard negotiations as a sign of failure, since in most cases they lead to a no-winner-no-loser scenario, and the potential winner feels cheated. But military confrontation as a means of settling conflicts does not pay

⁴⁸ *Methodist Recorder* Thursday, April 29, 1999, p.15

⁴⁹ One of the ways Zimbabwe carried out this transformation process was to exchange weapons for economic tools. For one gun handed in, there were agricultural implements or other tools to help the reintegration of soldiers into the socio-economic life. Mozambique, under ecumenical leadership, did the same.

attention to long-term consequences. It is Micah's vision of a society in which weapons are transformed into agricultural tools, which can be the inspiration for Rwandan Christians who are working tirelessly for peace.

7.4. Becoming instruments of justice

Christians are called to seek and practise justice. Peace and justice are inextricably linked. Because justice is a necessary pre-requisite for the establishment of peace; but the justice to be worked for cannot simply be identified with the demands of any one class or party grouping. It must be truly impartial, without bias to the rich or to the poor. The imperative of justice requires all people as bearers of God's image to work for the restoration of the shattered and distorted social order in which they live. And it must be done in all spheres of life; not only political but also social and economic.

Since After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, many scholars scholars have focussed their discussions on criminal justice, and there is a temptation to ignore or underestimate the need for economic justice. This is of particular importance because of Rwandan past and present circumstances,⁵⁰ when economic exclusion has been one of the underlying factors of the Rwandan conflicts. As Gorringer observes, social deprivation is one of the fundamental causes of criminal behaviour.⁵¹ Attempts to build a new and just economic system will have to be inclusive, involving people in responsible, participatory and economically rewarding activity. It has to lead to participation in economic activities and decision-making. It entails framing economic issues in ways that informed citizens are enabled to consider alternative options about their own lives, make intentional decisions, and express their views. It involves facilitating and empowering the poor and other disadvantaged groups to participate on a more equal basis in economic activities.

⁵⁰ In addition to the accumulated consequences of past economic injustices, the 1994 tragedy created more opportunities for more economic crime. The situation is as acute in the countryside as in towns where tensions are likely to persist for many years. When about two million left following the genocide and the war, old refugees (those of 1959) came in and took over land and properties. When the time came for the 1994 refugees to return, the situation became tense as the new refugees wanted to recover their properties.

⁵¹ Gorringer, T., *God's Just Vengeance: Crime, violence and the rhetoric of salvation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.251

The Rwandan Christian community must address these issues. As Hay commented 'The Church should also engage in transformational ministries which involve taking a prophetic stance in identifying economic injustice, offering alternative visions for economic life, engaging in advocacy on particular issues and in empowerment ministries, organising the poor and the oppressed to exercise countervailing power to the forces that are oppressing them'.⁵² It must risk the scandal of particularity, as did Christ.

Furthermore the Rwandan Christian community must rethink the position of women in the society. This should lead to a change in the law on land-ownership and its implementation, in order to protect women and give them equal shares of land in the custom of inheritance, *umunani*, which at present consists of dividing the father's land among the sons, and daughters normally get nothing. Such a change would constitute a protection in the event, for example, of divorce. Women's lower social status would gradually change as a result. The rationale for guaranteeing women economic rights is a profoundly biblical concept because it allows them access to what is fundamentally necessary to sustain life for most Rwandans –land. Men in general will need to change their attitude to women and relinquish the power which exclusive possession of land traditionally gave them.

Programs will be needed for enabling women in their role as mothers (ante-natal and post-natal care) and carers of the community (to increase their productivity and efficiency in income-generating activities). The Church of the future will need to be organised in such a way that women take a more active part in ecclesiastical as well as in public affairs which will in turn develop their self-confidence, and help Rwanda to highlight hope rather than despair.

Changes in the law are also needed to protect the Twa people, the most neglected section of the Rwandan people. These changes would have to ensure that not only do the Twa get the lands they need alongside and among other Rwandan people, but also that those of them who do not want to leave the forest are not forced to do so.

There is no doubt that education is still one of the keys that can unlock the Rwandan situation. As Mandela said in his farewell speech, 'a country's future lies with its

⁵² Hay, D., 'What does the Lord require? Three Statements on Christian Faith and Economic Life' in Schlossberd, H., Samuel, V., & Sider, R.J., *Christianity and Economics in the Post-Cold War Era: The Oxford Declaration and Beyond*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994, p.147

youth, and the best weapon that the youth can have is education'.⁵³ But what kind of education? As already shown in chapter five Rwandan education has been by and large ethnic and divisive. The community has been damaged by the quality of education and the way it was given. Not only did many injustices surround the decisions of who was to be educated but also education itself was used as an ideological tool for domination and exploitation. As Wooldridge says, such a system is degrading: "the outcome of a competitive education system can hardly be regarded as just if some competitors start off far behind others and weighed down with balls and chains".⁵⁴ Therefore in a renewed Rwandan community, education should be geared above all towards helping pupils to love God, love their neighbours and love their country; how to solve their conflicts, before they are told to memorise names of mountains and rivers. Gorringe notes that, 'the procedures of conflict resolution ought to become a standard part of primary education so that children are socialised from the very first to understand both that there are other ways to solve problems than through violence, and to respect and understand the feelings of others'.⁵⁵ Education and employment policies are to be revised so as to allow every Rwandan, without any discrimination, equal opportunities.

Taxation in Rwanda and the mentality in which it was born suggest that the poor pay to maintain the rich. Changes are needed both in policy and mentality so that through taxation the 'haves' help the 'have nots'. Since Rwandan ecclesiastical institutions do not have to pay taxes irrespective of how much profit they make, the social aim of taxation policy would be a challenge to them in itself and a call to these institutions to examine their conscience. Resources and opportunities have to be relinquished by the minority who hold them in monopoly, investing only in their personal prestige and luxury.⁵⁶

There is a need to give recognition to refugees and reintegrate those internally and socially excluded from dignity and place in the Rwandan community; a need to settle this problem once and for all by recognising that all Rwandans have all the rights of citizenship, by creating a safe environment for everyone, and abandoning exclusive policies by which politicians maintain their grip on power. Socio-economic justice should therefore begin by creating socio-economic structures and atmosphere that would allow all Rwandans a share in the resources, the produce and the opportunities

⁵³ *The Scotsman* of June 17, 1999, p.12

⁵⁴ Wooldridge A., *Meritocracy and the Classless Society*, 1995, p.32

⁵⁵ Gorringe, T., *op. cit.*, 1996, p.255

⁵⁶ Braeckman, C., *op.cit.*p.15

of the country. As Blank points out, one of the determinants of socio-economic development is the interests it pursues. If socio-economic decisions are made by an 'elite class' which is itself uprooted from the community, then it will promote the well-being only of the wealthiest citizens and this will not only stifle economic growth but also cause socio-economic upheavals.⁵⁷

Economic democracy is one of the key practices that can contribute to the Rwandan social and economic development. It assumes wide participation of ownership and management of economic institutions and structures.⁵⁸ It is therefore important to clarify the law and bring in new laws that promote equality. Socio-economic justice does not only involve money and land; it must extend to the areas of constitutional practice, legal practice, economic practice, educational practice and the protection of family life.⁵⁹ It is in this way that it can be an engine for a dynamic action that remedies injustices and quarrels occurring in the lives of Rwandans on a daily basis.⁶⁰

One of the important steps, however, would be to bring every Rwandan under the law. Rwanda has known cases of people in positions of authority behaving as if they were above the law, and a situation when there was impunity for some and unjust punishments for others.⁶¹ The recognition of the possibility of both human sin and weaknesses in the desire to accumulate more and forget others requires discipline and law.

However, the Rwandan Christian community forms an indissoluble part of the international Christian fellowship. There is no need to rehearse the powerful biblical obligation to establish community relationship between the members of the visible Christian fellowship world-wide. Paul made it clear that whatever happens individually (be it occasions of joy, pain, need, etc.), all members of the corporate body are to rejoice or suffer together according to the appropriateness of the situation or circumstances. This sharing in life is what it means to belong to a Christian

⁵⁷ Blank, M. R. *op. cit.* p.79

⁵⁸ Stackhouse, L. M.; McCann, P. D.; Roels, J. S.; and Williams, N.P.; (ed.) *On Moral Business-Classical and Contemporary Resources for Ethics in Economic Life*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995.p.458

⁵⁹ Kenith, A. D. *op. cit.* p. 66

⁶⁰ Morton, A., (ed.) *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 81

⁶¹ Questions like 'Don't you have laws in your country?' have made me think more deeply about the evils of my society. I observed that the problem is twofold. Sometimes, the law is not clear whilst in other cases, the law is clear but the people do not want to be bound by it. In this case some laws need reform and others need enforcement.

community: "Christianity is not merely a doctrine or a system of beliefs, it is Christ living in us and uniting men to one another in His own Life and unity".⁶² Therefore the international Christian community not only has the responsibility to give the Rwandan Christian community moral and prayer support, but also to be actively involved through the sharing of wisdom and experience gained through the development of Christian practice elsewhere. For instance it has been observed that the peasant population is afraid of the soldiers still under arms, who are themselves afraid of being demobilised and asked to clean out swamps for tea plantations, or to perform similar unglamorous tasks.⁶³ Christians overseas have a role to play in alleviating this fear by talking to people at all levels, particularly politicians. The persistence of Rwandan debt⁶⁴, with its tremendous toll on Rwandans is one of the areas which seriously question the sincerity of the Christian international community in proclaiming shared responsibility, and its assumed unity. For instance what does the European Christian investor have in common with a coffee grower of Rwanda? A universal sensitivity of Christians to the problems of society as a whole is required in order to show the meaning of the Church as one body. This societal accountability on the part of professed Christians is indicative of what Jesus meant when he said that those in Christ ought to be the "salt" and the "light" of the world. Therefore the Christian community world-wide must wrestle with the question asked by Jubilee 2000 in its campaign for debt cancellation: "How is it then, that at a time when those professing to follow Christ comprise over 35 per cent of the world's population – larger than at any time in history – we (the Christian Church) stand on the threshold of one of the most outrageous disasters mankind has ever faced?"⁶⁵. This question reveals that Christians are missing out on the invaluable opportunity of being a world-wide movement capable of positively influencing materialistic societies and their economic systems. So as Jubilee 2000 has it: "We should be the salt to stop society's corruption and subsequent disintegration, preserving its quality". In a world where dishonesty, corruption, usury, profiteering and greed have become the standard, Christians are challenged to be more prophetic and actively involved than ever before.

⁶² McDonnell, T. (ed.), *A Thomas Merton Reader*, Harcourt: Brace & World, 1962, p.323

⁶³ Webster, P. & Ive, J., 'Confidence-building and the achievement of a constitutional settlement in Rwanda: Some guidelines', NPI Rwanda Series Paper No3, 1995, p.22

⁶⁴ Rwanda has a debt of over one billion U.S dollars and this amount is increasing as war continues in the Great Lakes region.

⁶⁵ Jubilee 2000, *The Debt Cutter's Handbook*. London, 1996, p.40

Such actions from the Church (through its world-wide institutions such as WCC, Lutheran Federation, Lambeth Conference, Methodist World Conference) may bring it into confrontation with giant companies' control over the arms trade and financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. These trans-national companies control the whole chain of commerce between the original producer and the final consumer⁶⁶ The International Christian community can also support world-wide organisations such as the UNCTAD Common Fund for Commodities, which promotes economic justice. This fund offers a 'second window', which can be used by governments attempting to diversify and add value to their primary product exports. It is based on the separate commodity agreements between producer and consumer countries, in which the outcome depends on the bargaining strength of the producers. Efforts could be made by Church-related movements to encourage alternative trade exchanges between small and medium sized enterprises particularly in developing countries. This could take the form of networks and joint ventures, both across the borders between neighbouring developing countries and with partners in the developed countries⁶⁷

The International Christian community will need also to raise its voice so that the GATT and the World Trade Organisation hear it. Under the provisions of the latest Uruguay Round agreements of GATT, trade is to be freed, both in goods and services. For whose benefit? The overall calculations suggest that the 15 per cent of the world's peoples in industrialised lands will get 67 per cent of the benefit of this freedom; that the 85 per cent of the world's peoples in non-industrialised lands will get 33 per cent of the benefits and that sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region of all, will get nothing and will probably actually suffer.⁶⁸ Over the past twenty years, Less Developed Countries' exports have grown far more slowly than world trade, and

⁶⁶ Barrat Brown, M., *Africa's Choices. After Thirty Years of the World Bank*. England: Penguin Books, 1995, p. 356

⁶⁷ Barrat Brown, M. *op.cit.* pp.356/57. Barrat and Halland made some useful suggestions for the future of alternative trading which would lead to what Cooke called strategic alliances for the modernisation of production structures in developing countries.

⁶⁸ Madden, P. & Madeley, J., *Winners and Losers: The Impact of the GATT Uruguay Round on Developing Countries*. Christian Aid, 1993, pp 2-3 and p.23. For Barrat, the reason for the disparity is that most African countries lack any strong manufacturing base and still need protection for their infant manufacturing and service industries; they will lose their preferential treatment, the main market for their primary produce, and the cocoa and coffee growers will lose most heavily; they will not be able to take advantage of new market openings because many of these in the industrialised countries will remain closed to African products by quotas and non-tariff barriers and where production, for example of vegetable oils, beet sugar and corn syrup in Europe and North America, is subsidised; and many African farmers will not be able to compete with grains and other farm products from the North which will continue to receive Northern government subsidies (Barrat, *op.cit.* p.357/8)

their collective share of world merchandise exports has consequently declined from about 0.8% in 1980 to 0.46% in 1995. In the 1990s, the annual growth in the value of LDC exports has averaged less than 2%, compared with 8% for world trade as a whole.⁶⁹

It is therefore in the interest of economic justice that GATT does not remain, as an Indian scholar described it, “a one way street’ for the rich countries to go down while the traffic is too heavy for the poor to make their way up”.⁷⁰ In fact during the 1980s the developing countries’ share of this world – wide investment fell from 26 to 17 per cent, Africa’s from 3 to 2 per cent, and in 1992 Africa actually suffered a loss of investment. At least a third of all world trade takes place inside transnational companies; 90 per cent of such companies are based in developed countries and none in sub-Saharan Africa. There are said to be 37,000 in the world with 170,000 affiliates and the top 100 are said to own about a third of the world-wide foreign direct investment stock.⁷¹ The future looks even grimmer under the provision of MAI (the Multilateral Agreement on Investments)⁷². The agreement aims at the protection of investments world-wide. It intends, among other things, to abolish all the existing barriers to multinationals to operate wherever and whenever they want. The proposals plan the setting up of an international court that would prosecute those governments which would not comply with the rules and regulations of the MAI. So governments would be liable to be punished for not allowing multinationals to operate as they want.

In the face of this growing injustice, Seabrook and Sider call for a vision of a transformed world which is less alienated, less polluted and less exploitative, by calling on those in the rich countries of the North to reduce their levels of consumption through the development of new values.⁷³

⁶⁹ Special Report on Less Developed Countries trade. 1998, p.6

⁷⁰ Barrat, B. M. *op.cit.* p. 358

⁷¹ UN Centre for Transnational Corporations (UN CTC), *Investment Report, 1993: Transnational Corporations and Integrated International Production*, New York, pp. 19-23

⁷² A confidential draft text titled *Multilateral Agreement on Investment: Consolidated Texts and Commentary* was circulated among government and corporate officials in the OECD countries. Behind closed doors, secret consultations and negotiations took place at the OECD headquarters in Paris. The original plan was to have the draft text ready for approval at the OECD ministers’ meeting scheduled for early May, 1997; but OECD officials later decided that another four to five months would be needed to complete the negotiations. Eventually the project was put on hold probably waiting for another opportunity to relaunch it.

⁷³ Sider, R., *op.cit.*, See Barbara W., *Progress in a Small Planet*, Penguin, 1979; Harrison, P., *The Third World Tomorrow*, Penguin, 1980; and Ben Jackson in *Poverty and the Planet*, Penguin, 1990

In pursuing this end, Christians in the North would not act in isolation from their brethren in the South, the Rwandan Christian community would also strengthen its ties with world-wide ecclesiastical movements in order to challenge the immoral behaviour of giant multinationals and financial institutions, some of which have their subsidiaries in Rwanda. It is well known for instance that the World Bank encouraged developing countries to borrow money in the 1970s to accommodate oil proceeds. When things went wrong the Bank and the IMF spawned a wide range of loan programmes to cover debt repayment including the Structural Adjustment Facility. Increasing the loan portfolio became the criterion of success, at least for the Bank's employees, who earned salaries 50 per cent above other UN personnel.⁷⁴ The promises of the G7 to reform the two financial institutions were not carried out. At its Naples meeting in 1994, the summit agreed to discuss reform at its next meeting, but did not do so. At its Birmingham summit in May 1998, despite the powerful army of demonstrators under the umbrella of 'Jubilee 2000', the summit failed to take any real action towards the relief of debt. The campaign in which many Christians are involved cannot risk losing momentum, and Rwandans, with more than 1 billion dollars of foreign debt, have every reason to become involved.

The most insidious enemy of action like that described in this chapter is a feeling of powerlessness, of being overwhelmed and immobilised, that nothing can be done to challenge either the ruling class or the powerful international structures. If the prophets in Israel had been overwhelmed by their situation, they would have been silenced. By their self-understanding as messengers of God to specific contexts, they endured the hatred, opposition, and persecution. God provided them with spiritual strength, vision and energy to speak out. He has also provided what is needed for Rwandans to live as God's people and to be this prophetic voice. Redistribution of resources, lowering of lifestyle for the rich, alternative investments and cultural renewal are some of the steps towards the new community.

7.5. Land Redistribution

The problem of land ownership is crucial for Rwandans. There are too many competing for land, therefore the problem needs to be carefully resolved. There are four aspects to it: individual Christians and ecclesiastical institutions possess more

⁷⁴ 'Interview with Lewis Preston, World Bank President', *Financial Times*, 18 July, 1994

than is necessary, with some of it lying unused while people in the neighbourhood have no land on which to produce what they need for their survival. They accumulate wealth from these estates whilst the people in the neighbourhood are poor. Women and Twa are denied access to land. It is God's will that those excluded from their lands, or who have been denied access to it get a share: 'Once more I will plant them on their own soil and they shall never be uprooted from the soil I have given them' (Amos 9:15). The mainstream churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Episcopal Church, The Baptist, the Pentecostal and the Free Methodist can make meaningful and contextualized confession only by referring to precise aspects of social injustice committed in the past; among which land-ownership is a priority. As Forrester observed, this is only possible for churches which 'are realistic about their own situations, theologically serious, cogent in argumentation, attentive to the facts, and willing to pioneer'.⁷⁵ Rwandan churches must to avoid issuing statements which are not followed by action. This is of crucial importance, because as Kenith rightly pointed out:

The church must move from a simplistic and emotional theology of *metanoia* which ends up as simply begging pardon, to a theology based on the incarnated suffering servanthood of God —a God who hears and experiences the cries of people in pain, alienated from land, community and culture. This theology calls for repentance for the churches' participation in and connivance with conquest, invasion, slavery and exploitation — all those forces that mutilate God's people and destroy life.⁷⁶

It would be useless, indeed hypocritical for Rwandan Christian denominations concerned in this problem of land to make public confession and repentance before God and the Rwandan people,⁷⁷ then do nothing to right the wrong that has been committed. Therefore they must take the lead in restoring their land to its original owners.⁷⁸ Restitution would constitute a reparation of the violated right of the original owner, a restoration of the balance of rights, a reconstruction of the natural order of justice.⁷⁹ It assumes that injustice, through wrongful possession of another's

⁷⁵ Forrester, D.B., *Beliefs, Values and Policies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p.97

⁷⁶ Kenith, A. David, *op. cit.*, p.66

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ One of the arguments used by church authorities in order to hold on these lands has been the definition of a church as an entity to which everybody has right and responsibility. In this sense what belongs to the church belongs to everybody. The problem with this understanding is that those victimised by the church as an institution can be ignored or lost in the confusion of who is the church. The ecclesiastical institutions need to find the original owner of the lands and deal directly with them.

⁷⁹ Davies, H.S.J., *op.cit.*, p.314

goods or through unjust damage, has been done and that it must be requited. Whether the possessor acted in good faith⁸⁰, in bad faith⁸¹, or in doubtful faith⁸², action must be taken. In the case of good faith, the possessor, after discovering that he/she is in possession of another's property and knowing the owner, must make restoration without delay. In the case of bad faith, the possessor is bound to make good that loss of which he/she is the cause. In the case of doubtful faith, the possessor must make genuine inquiry about the value of the thing as well as the true owner. Then he/she can make restitution.⁸³ By these actions Rwandan case restitution requires Christians and ecclesiastical institutions could set an example in the matter of land restitution.

Restitution is central to Jesus' teaching as reported in Luke's story (19:1-10). When Zacchaeus met Jesus and decided to repair the economic damage he had caused to the people he had robbed. He said: "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone I will pay back four times as much" (19:8). This is a classic illustration of reparation following the unjust accumulation of wealth. His action is of social and economic significance for his entire community: Like the confrontation between David and Nathan (cf. 2 Samuel 12:1-4), Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus led to a declaration that made a dramatic and substantial linkage between the religio-cultural and socio-economic spheres of life. Zacchaeus story has been cited in many struggles for social and economic justice elsewhere, particularly in South Africa⁸⁴, as a text which links repentance with restitution and reparation. For the people who have been robbed of their meagre source of income, this action is but an attempt towards the redistribution of opportunity, restoration of the dignity of those robbed and an honour to God.⁸⁵ It is as if Zacchaeus scored three goals at one go. He settled his accounts with God, with the individuals concerned and with the community.

⁸⁰ A possessor in good faith is the one who, without any fault, is ignorant of the fact that he/she holds or held another's property.

⁸¹ A possessor in bad faith is the one possessor who knowingly retains another's property unjustly.

⁸² A possessor in doubtful faith possessor is one who has good but not convincing reasons for thinking that he is in wrongful possession of another's property.

⁸³ Davies, H.S.J., *op.cit.*, p.322

⁸⁴ Gillian D. S., *Mayibuye iAfrika! A Grounded Theology of Land Restitution in South Africa*, A PhD Thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 1996, p.270. See also Desmond Tutu, *Hope and Suffering: Sermon and Speeches*, Johannesburg, 1983

⁸⁵ The story of Zacchaeus is generally seen as a case of redistribution from a rich man to the poor, and a more specific case wherein that tax collector is prepared to settle specific acts of fraud declaring a fourfold restitution in each case. See also Gillian, D. S. *op. cit.*, p.271

Jesus' attitude itself has far-reaching implications. First for Jesus to have accepted the invitation from a 'chief-tax collector' described not only as rich but as 'very rich' confused the audience that believed that if Jesus was from God, he should not have accepted the invitation.. But the outcome of the event was closely relevant to his commitment to the poor and marginalized (cf. Lke 4:18-19). Jesus approves what Zacchaeus undertook to do: "today salvation has come to this house"; and by affirming that Zacchaeus is also a son of Abraham, Jesus brought back the excluded person into the community. Zacchaeus, on the other hand, by paying back what he had robbed, recognised that his fellow Jews were entitled to the possessions they had been deprived of. People around Jesus could not understand him and in their confusion they grumbled trying to make Jesus aware of the implications of what he said and did. Unmoved, Jesus knew the risk and the importance of his action: "the inclusion of such a high-profile sinner, one whose sin was so obviously at the expense of his people, witnesses to the scandalous inclusivity of God's grace - a grace that enables reparation to be made and reconciliation to be effected".⁸⁶ Here is one of the cases when repentance becomes the good news for both the oppressor and the oppressed, the individual and the community at the same time.

It is by contrasting the inclusive salvation offered by Jesus to Zacchaeus with the exclusive ethnocentric and individual competition inherent in Rwandan society that Rwandans can visualise the urgency of a renewed Christian community in which repentance, reparation and restitution can take effect. The Rwandan Christian community, by repudiating the early missionary philosophy which promoted the acquisition of more lands so that as many Rwandans as possible could be got inside the walls of the churches will henceforth be concerned with how Rwandans can live together as a community called to be one in God. The usual argument that church institutions need lands on which to carry out their socio-economic activities does not hold given that they own lands that lie bare and unused. The land owned by some parishes is still far more extensive than the activities expected to be carried out on it.⁸⁷

By reviewing landholdings in order to return extra lands to those who are landless, making sure they either go to the original owners or to those who need them most, Rwandan Christians and churches would see it as an integral part of the process of

⁸⁶ Gillian, D. S., *op.cit.*, p.272

⁸⁷ Musebeya Parish in the Free Methodist Church is one example. In 1988 it had 42 little-used hectares, except for two dozen sheep and six goats. For another ten years the Free Methodist Church defended the holding of that land, promising to put it into use. Nothing happened.

empowering and renewal of those for whom a compassionate God is the ultimate owner of the land and who knows what it is to live on and off the land.

7.6. Moderation and Equality

Rwandans feel also let down by the leadership style of their churches. And if they have every right to expect that power exercised within the Church reflects 'God's domination-free order'⁸⁸, the *koinonia* which must be seen in microcosm in the Church, is, as Wink notes, characterised by partnership, interdependence, equality of opportunity and mutual respect; and also the repudiation of violence, domination hierarchies, patriarchy and authoritarianism.⁸⁹ Were the Rwandan church leaders to neglect their responsibility to foster humility and equality one would doubt if they are properly performing their primary function of working for *koinonia* and the provision of a sense of belonging to it.

Therefore a renewed Rwandan Christian community would be honest and modest, and eradicate elitism and clientelism within its ranks. For instance if ministers in a rural area continue to be paid only about a third as much as their counterparts working in the town⁹⁰, it will be difficult for the Rwandan Christian community to preach about the social inclusiveness of the Gospel of God. As the WCC study document '*Economy as a Master of Faith*' noted, an examination of Christians' lifestyles and priorities, needs to be made in the light of the divine vision of economic justice.⁹¹ For Lim, a simple and sharing lifestyle grounded in the biblical and theological framework of love and justice is what is required for individual Christians as well as ecclesiastical institutions.⁹²

It will be hard; some ecclesiastical patterns give excessive powers and privileges to church leaders. The Roman Catholic Church for instance, observed Deschamps, is a

⁸⁸ Righter, P. & Francis, J.L., *Gone but not forgotten: Church leaving and returning*, London: Darton, Longman + Todd, 1998, p. 110

⁸⁹ Wink, W., *Engaging the Powers: discernment and resistance in a world of domination*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 107

⁹⁰ Differences in salaries among the clergy within the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda have brought about disputes and mistrust. One pastor could receive ten times more than his colleague depending on his qualifications and the location of his parish.

⁹¹ Hay, D., 'What does the Lord require? Three Statements on Christian Faith and Economic Life' in Schlossberd, H., Samuel, V., & Sider, R.J., *Christianity and Economics in the Post-Cold War Era: The Oxford Declaration and Beyond*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994, p.147

⁹² David Lim did a book review for '*Victims of Development : Resistance and alternatives*' in Third Way, January 1994, vol.16, no10

hierarchical organisation where different dioceses enclose themselves in a 'micro-system of Episcopal dioceses'.⁹³ For Father Muzungu, the problem lies in the undemocratic nature of the institution: "The Church is not a democracy. The Pope can bring an incompetent person from anywhere and appoint him to any position."⁹⁴ Often the use of such powers lead to abusive exploitation. The Episcopal and Roman Catholic models give their Bishops unlimited time in office, resulting in complacency on the part of the leaders. They are highly hierarchical and their top-down approach precludes full member-participation, although there have been individual priests⁹⁵ who initiated projects that involved church-members.

However the situation is not much different in those ecclesiastical institutions in which church leaders have limited time in office. In fact their struggle to cling on to powers was sometimes ferocious and carried negative consequences for the lives of the communities. The participation of members and the integrity of the Gospel became corrupted by the leaders trying to buy votes from their communities or force their stay in office. As Gatwa observes, "Rwandan Protestantism has become a centralising system in the hands of the 'legal representatives', the bishops and the ministers, with little regard for or accountability to the congregations"⁹⁶

One of the problems is that the ecclesiastical institutions were a replica of state institutions, so church leaders and the clergy were tempted to compare themselves with civil servants working at the same level of jurisdiction. As a result they tended to live far above what their communities could afford. Sometimes lay people took advantage of their standing as representatives in meetings to express their anger over the fact that the clergy sometimes flaunted their good cars and good housing instead of looking after the flock.⁹⁷ This attitude of the clergy undermined their attempts to talk to the small minority of wealthy Christian Rwandans who monopolized and embezzled the country's resources. Therefore the challenge of the widening gap separating rich and poor Rwandan Christians is to be faced not only by lay people but also by the clergy.

⁹³ Deschamps, P., 'Eglise, Qu'as-tu Fais Pendant le Genocide?' In *Dialogue no 198*, Fevrier-Mars 1996, pp.85-88.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Gatwa T., *op. cit.*, p. 293

⁹⁵ Father Maindro is one of those popular Roman Catholic priests who managed to keep the grassroots informed and involved in the work of the parish.

⁹⁶ Gatwa, T., *op. cit.*, p.293.

⁹⁷ It had become almost fashionable for every educated clergyman to aim for a car and/or a good house in the city. The clergy were becoming over-ambitious to get material wealth and well-being whilst their congregations were not able to afford the lifestyle they aspired to.

Thus any practical action requires a lower lifestyle for the few clergy at the top in order to raise the physical well-being of the many. Having lived at a standard far above average they are morally obliged to observe a certain degree of moderation. And the recurrent administrative budget of the churches will need trimming, so that more of the available resources may be released towards socio-economic programmes and projects. There will inevitably be sacrifices and hard choices. For Blank, those who commit themselves to economic justice should be above all be prepared to lose. "Ultimately, a commitment to economic justice confronts an extremely difficult dilemma: if we are to make the world a more equitable and more just place, some of us will have less than we do now."⁹⁸ To correct the selfishness and greed that distort economic justice, Rwandan Christians must be convinced that they have to give up something, and that they will be worse off materially than before, as they subordinate their personal concerns: "Christians who believe that God has a special care for the poor and weak must school themselves to rise above their own interests in order to seek God 's justice"⁹⁹

This means that Rwandan bishops, church leaders and some of the clergy will need to reconsider what models of cars they buy, the kind of housing the Church gives them and even their salaries. The restitution of land will impact on the lifestyle of the clergy and on their economic power. But in the long run, both Rwandan church leaders and the wealthy members stand to gain by agreeing to live at a standard affordable by Rwandan society as a whole. Thus churches will be required to undertake cost-reduction measures, so that expenditure balances with income. If they do not, all the consequences arising from a situation in which there is a big gap between the wealthy and the poor will continue to take their toll. The example which springs to mind is the 1994 tragedy that had in its roots the struggle for land and control over state resources.

Although poverty will not be entirely kept at bay merely by redistributing lands, this action would contribute to the healing and restoration of the Rwandan Christian community. The purpose of the suggested moderation would be for the service of God; and that the poor would not have to be overtaxed in order to maintain the élite in an artificial lifestyle; nor must the clergy use for themselves foreign donations which are intended or could be used for the communities' basic needs.

⁹⁸ Blank, M. R., *op.cit.*, p.141

⁹⁹ Forrester, D., & Skene, D., (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.79

7.7. Alternative Investment: An option for the poor

Another practical action would be to think through the possibilities of increasing income that would be redistributed into the community in the forms of interest-free loans or at least low-interest loans. However decades of experience have shown that it has been difficult for Christian communities as institutions to carry on their activities and sustain themselves if relying only on the donations and stipends of each month. With the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, Rwandan churches have been reluctant to establish other sources of income to fund these needs. Overall Christian thinking on financial investment has been reflected in the following approaches¹⁰⁰:

a. The 'do nothing' approach. Some Christians argue that the Church as an institution should be content with the offerings and donations of its members. These are the people who think it is unethical on religious grounds to be involved in making profits. Most evangelical missionaries who worked in Rwanda seem to have held this opinion. One of the Free Methodist missionaries expressed an opinion that prevails in evangelical missionary circles: "I strongly believe that if every member truly and honestly gives a tithe of his or her income to the Church, the Church will have all that it needs to carry on its ministry. Of course, we cannot, and should not, compel people to tithe. But if the Church leaders do it and encourage the members to do it, the needs will be met, as stated in Malachi 3:8-10."¹⁰¹ In practice, experience has proved that even with Churches in developed countries, tithing and donations are sometimes not enough to fulfil the church's financial needs. The same missionary cautiously balanced her statement. "I must add that in our churches here in U.S. we have not succeeded in getting every member to tithe, and when we plan our annual budgets we always face the problem of insufficient funds, yet the church meets its needs and does not go into debt."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ See '*Our Best Interest: Guidelines for Ethical Investment*', published by The Christian Ethical Investment Group, 1992, pp. 6-12; Domini, A., *Ethical Investing*, Reading: Addison Wesley, 1984 and EIRIS, *Money & Ethics*, 1996.

¹⁰¹ Cox, E. from correspondence between the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda and the Department of Mission in the Free Methodist Church of United States of America. cf. Free Methodist Missionary's reaction to the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda's plans to launch income generating projects for the central fund of the Church.

¹⁰² *ibid*

Critics say this is another approach which is true in theory but unrealistic in practice; it is foolish for the Church to base its budgets on *ifs* when it knows the *ifs* will not go away. Even the claims that the U.S. Free Methodist Church had always met its needs must be regarded with caution since their financial aid to field missions was sometimes reduced and did not take into account the real needs of the people who asked for their help.¹⁰³ The Rwandan Free Methodist Church has always been in financial difficulties: "the Rwandan Free Methodist Church's financial needs are too many with too little income. I do not see how some departments will survive if nothing is done to increase the funding of these activities"¹⁰⁴.

Also at issue is the theological foundation of the 'do nothing' approach. Is this doctrine that promotes a complete rejection of the values of wealth and success feasible?¹⁰⁵ or just another description of a life in a world of fiction. Is it wise to interpret Jesus' statement about not being concerned with things of this world too literally? One of the risks of this position is that it can lead to an illusory escape from the world, which is not what Jesus intended. As McDonnell has it, this position is dangerous since it leads to an unrealistic way of life: "But if you try to escape from this world merely by leaving the city and hiding yourself in solitude, you will only take the city with you into solitude; and yet you can be entirely out of the world while remaining in the midst of it, (...). and the man who locks himself up in private with his own selfishness has put himself into a position where the evil within him will either possess him like a devil or drive him out of his head."¹⁰⁶ In a world where human needs increase day by day as the population increases and new challenges arise, to hold the view that wealth creation should be opposed is not only erroneous, but actually leads to poverty.

In Rwanda the 'Temperance Movement' that held these views and campaigned for them, had serious problems with its members and with the government. Other

¹⁰³ For instance the Free Methodist of Rwanda budgeted for \$US 35,000 of financial help from the US Free Methodist Church but received \$US 20,000. The situation improved in 1995 when they budgeted for \$US 24,000 and received \$20,000.

¹⁰⁴ Ruhengeri Parish's Report to the Annual Conference of the Free Methodist Church held in Kibogora between 27-31/7/1990

¹⁰⁵ Over two thousand years ago, a group of Greek philosophers defended the ascetic life, gave away everything they owned, and sought only the simplest and most basic things in life. One of them, Diogenes, lived in a bathtub and owned nothing but a lantern with which he is said to have searched the faces of everyone, looking for "one honest person". When Alexander the Great came to visit him in his bathtub, he asked the famous philosopher, "what can I do for you, wise man?" Diogenes turned to the ruler of most of the known world and replied, "Move over, you are blocking the sun".

¹⁰⁶ McDonnell T. P(ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 323

Christian denominations taught that a Christian could invest in agricultural activities, but was to be discouraged from any involvement in business activities such as trade, buying shares, transport, even opening a restaurant.¹⁰⁷ This view found good soil in the Rwandan tradition by which only a very limited number of items could be bought and sold, so for instance it took a long time before food could be bought and sold, because people saw no purpose in investing in cooked food shops.¹⁰⁸

b. The ‘avoidance’ approach. This is when Christians refuse to invest in business activities that do not match their ethical and Christian principles. This approach targets companies that offer harmful services or those whose culture and tradition in business breed strong resentments such as tobacco, arms trade, drug trafficking and companies where bribery (defined by Shaw & Barry as a remuneration for the performance of an act inconsistent with the work contract or the nature of the work one has been hired to perform¹⁰⁹) is common practice. Most of the Evangelical churches in Rwanda state in their books of discipline that they avoid business with alcohol and tobacco companies, or with lottery.¹¹⁰

The ‘avoidance’ approach, though better than the ‘do nothing’ approach, does not go far enough. It can only calm one’s conscience that one’s money is not harming anybody. As Domini puts it “Avoidance is a good but limited first step in ethical investing”.¹¹¹

c. The ‘positive’ approach. Here one invests in companies with products or services or ways of doing business that one does approve; for instance companies that enhance the quality of life and relationships with both employees and the communities in which they are established. The current Church initiatives in Rwanda to invest in education, building dormitories and accommodation for secondary school children who face difficulties finding accommodation for themselves, guest houses, conference centres and productive units fit into this approach. As a safeguard,

¹⁰⁷ The Free Methodist Church of Rwanda and the Pentecostal Church were among those who held these views. It is only very recently that their attitude was relaxed.

¹⁰⁸ One could venture on a two-day journey with the necessary food, avoiding any temptation to buy food on the way. In one incident two senior church ministers in the Free Methodists opened a restaurant which they quickly closed since the whole church complained about that; that it was a scandal for them to sell food, instead of giving it.

¹⁰⁹ Shaw, W., & Barry, V, *Moral Issues in Business* (fourth ed.), California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989, p.303

¹¹⁰ For the Free Methodist Church see the *Book of Discipline* p. 47 (the Kinyarwanda version)

¹¹¹ Domini, A., *Ethical Investing*, Reading: Addison Wesley, 1984, p. 3

investors are encouraged to be vigilant so that if these activities are diverted from ethical and Christian standards, they respond quickly to the changes.¹¹²

d. The 'activist' approach. When one adopts this approach, one invests in a company with a bad record with the sole intention of changing its business behaviour by exercising ownership rights to make those changes. The objective is to change the bad into the good. This attitude carries high risk. There are fears that one might be carried away either unwittingly or because of the lack of power to assert a positive influence on what happens in the company. There has been no such initiative in Rwanda.

e. The 'do it your own way' approach. Some Christian institutions run many risks in joining secular companies in their businesses of making profits. There is for instance the risk of becoming lost in the debate, or being carried away by companies that care very little whether the mission of the Church is being fulfilled or not. Therefore some Christians suggest that the church institutions should consider going it alone and in their own way:

I think the Church has the ability to initiate its own economic activities that can generate income without mixing with financial activities that have been started by others who usually do not share the Church's ideals and values. The aim of the church is not commerce or seeking financial profits as it is for secular companies. It would be better for the Church to generate projects and run them on its own. These projects could be conference centers, guest houses and cheap bed-and-breakfasts, houses, holiday centres, shopping centres that are accessible to "rubanda rugufi" (the socially low people) and transportation and communication projects such as buses, ferries, fax, internet and telephones"¹¹³

The point is that if church institutions are successful in their own economic activities, they can set an example to other businesses. From this perspective, it is important that Rwandan churches serve as evidence that financial investments are not incompatible with being a Christian or serving God. As institutions, churches will have to identify and develop means of income generation which are consistent with the Gospel. The Church can give an example in the management of land, hospitals, schools, guest houses, hostels and stores. If the Church does this in a Christian

¹¹²EIRIS, *Money & Ethics*, 1996, p. 29

¹¹³ Minutes of the 'Bureau de Development de l'Eglise Méthodiste du Rwanda' for the year 1992, p. 9

manner, it can preach by example in the domain of economics and at the same time do justice to the poor. The problem with this approach is that sometimes the Church does not have enough money to start up on its own. Or if it is seen to be competing against powerful companies, it risks losing its assets if it does not dance to the tune of the day.

In listing these different approaches it is not intended to recommend any particular one to the exclusion of others, but rather to suggest that Christian denominations as well as Christian individuals, in order to influence the Rwandan socio-economic structure in which they live, have to get involved. The choice of any particular approach would be dictated by circumstances. Sometimes a combination of two or three approaches could be possible, whereas the 'do nothing' approach appears to be unsustainable both in theory and practice.

As Rwandan Christians and church institutions become involved in wealth creation, emphasis should be put on investment decisions as a prophetic voice to the world of business where even Christian institutions and Christian individuals are increasingly becoming money driven. Ethical investment can be an option for the poor in the sense that investments would be geared towards those who are financially excluded in order to enable them to participate in economic activities to increase their incomes. Both capital and information technology should be used to help the poor and the weak of society to get a better understanding of their situation, the opportunities available to them, the threats that loom around them, their strengths and their weaknesses.

7.8. Renewal of Reciprocity

The theological tradition to which Christian principles of giving and receiving belong recognises that possessions are gifts from God and have to be shared so that the life of the community be enhanced¹¹⁴. In this sense 'having' and 'giving' are but two sides of the same coin. But 'having' is also connected to 'being' (though the connection can lead to ambiguity about identity and worth)¹¹⁵ in the sense that the gift of life in the creative act of God is accompanied by the gift of material things. It is thus important, as Johnston emphasises, that the thing owned should never close a

¹¹⁴ Berghoef, G. & Dekoster, L., *God's yardstick for the abundant Life*, Michigan: p.23

¹¹⁵ Johnston, L.T., *Sharing Possessions – Mandate and symbol of faith*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981, p.114

human being to the call of the true God and the needs of other humans, nor possessions be allowed to function as a measure of human worth; if that happens, ownership becomes a sign of sin.¹¹⁶

Christians recognise the reciprocal character of the trinity (Jesus said of God: what you have is mine and what I have is yours) and the divine-human relationship. Although the Biblical theology seems to present God as the one who gives while human beings simply receive, Tillich emphasises that man's action in the world has significance not only for man but also for God'.¹¹⁷ According to Tillich's argument, God and man are responsible to each other: 'man is responsible for the destiny of God in so far as God is in the world; man is called to re-establish the broken unity in himself and in the world. God waits for man, and the answer to man's action is divine grace'¹¹⁸. Tillich argues that this 'reciprocity is always present in the divine-human relationship'. For him, the important element of this reciprocity is the free will of each party to decide whether or not to get involved.¹¹⁹ The one who gives does not know whether the other will accept the gift or will reject it; or whether the other party will reciprocate. Every transaction in a living relationship is characterised by an element of uncertainty and trust. Tillich rightly observes that this "free reciprocity between God and man is the root of the dynamic character of biblical religion"¹²⁰ This reciprocity and solidarity is meant to occur at all levels of society.

The Hebrew experience shows that members of the family had an obligation to help and to protect one another. There was in Israel an institution which defined the occasions when this obligation called for action; it was the institution of the *go'el*, from a root which means 'to buy back or to redeem' 'to lay claim to' but fundamentally its meaning was 'to protect'¹²¹. In this sense the *go'el* could be understood as a redeemer, a protector, a defender of the interests of the individual and of the group. When the term passed into the religious domain, it was used to refer to Yahweh as the avenger of the oppressed and saviour of his people.¹²² Thus solidarity, reciprocity find their roots in the ultimate unity of all human beings which

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.115

¹¹⁷ Tillich, P., *op. cit.*, 1959, p.195

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Tillich, P., *Biblical Religion and the search for Ultimate Reality*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955, p.30

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ de Vaux, R., *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961, p.21

¹²² Ibid., p.22

is in turn rooted in the divine life from which humanity emerged and to which it returns. In this complex web of relationship the divine act of protection, giving and redemption are understood equally. Such an inter-connection implies that, in the words of Tillich, all beings and God participate in each other¹²³ which is *koinonia*. This would also be the spiritual engine that keeps human service and solidarity with one another going. Tillich summarises the attitude that stems from this understanding:

When we become aware of this unity of all beings, something happens to us. The fact that others do not have, changes the character of our having: it undercuts our security and drives us beyond ourselves, to understand, to give, to share, to help.¹²⁴

The Rwandan Christian community evolved from a system in which the individual is defined in terms of relationship with others. This sense of identity is summarized by a Rwandan proverb that says: *Umuntu ni abantu*. Literally, it translates: 'A person is persons'. Mbiti¹²⁵ reformulates this maxim as follows: *I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am*. According to Ludwig Feuerbach "where there is no 'thou' there is no 'I'".¹²⁶ With such an inclusive meaning of identity, there was no dichotomy between the *I* and the *you*, no efforts were spared to integrate everybody into the community. As in many African contexts, the resulting individual-community relationship was characterized by mutual responsibility.¹²⁷ Individuals felt obliged to share their fortunes and misfortunes, their joys and sorrows with their fellows in the community, and to ensure continuity of the community through responsible, honest, sincere behaviour towards each other. The rule seemed to be, I must do good to others because I trust they will do the same to me. Or others are doing good to me because they trust I do good to them. Both individual and community responsibility go together. The individual gave services to the community whilst the community gave individuals a sense of belonging and provided them with moral and material protection. This was a social security system for all individuals.

However, although social life and reciprocity are intrinsic to human existence, a genuine community does not grow automatically, because individuals tend to disrupt

¹²³ Tillich, P., *The Eternal Now – Sermons*, London: SCM Press, 1963, p.35

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Quoted in Mugambi, J.N.K., *op.cit.*, p.200

¹²⁶ Feuerbach, L., *The Essence of Christianity*, p.92

¹²⁷ Mugambi, J.N.K., *op.cit.*, p.200

community by self-seeking, while society tends to oppress individuals through collective egoism and institutional injustice.¹²⁸ In the words of Reinhold Niebuhr, 'the community is the frustration as well as the realisation of individual life'.¹²⁹ The problems that arise for theology have always to be seen on two levels, the individual and the social. In the Rwandan context, we are concerned with the social implications of faith which in turn question the integrity of members of the Rwandan Christian community. But in other situations, religious thinkers prefer to scrutinise the individual. Kierkegaard, for instance, in reaction against a false collectivism, made faith and salvation a matter for individual decision.¹³⁰

Although the traditional reciprocal life has been overshadowed by the Rwandan experience of exclusion and hatred, it is still there; in what is termed the village economy, both de Lame and Taylor showed that all alliances and reciprocal giving still occur on the village level.¹³¹ On their arrival Christian missionaries found that reciprocal giving was a well known practice in Rwanda and tried to adjust to it. Rwandans exchanged gift with missionaries. The process continued and then receded as Rwandan Christians came more and more to be at the receiving end.¹³²

The creation of 'friendly societies' that spread in countryside in the 1980s were rooted in the philosophy of reciprocal giving and solidarity. In the 'friendly societies' also called *tontines*, *sosiyete* or *ibimina*, people take on a rota of collecting money from each member of the group and give the sum to one of the group for a specific project, which could be a housing project, purchase of a grinding mill or paying education fees.

On the same principle Rwandans are socially obliged to look after their elderly parents, care for one or two sisters who have been unsuccessful in marriage, intervene when the neighbours have been attacked or make a gift of labour. It is common for village people to exchange labour, food stuff and cattle among themselves in the form of free-will donation. In this reciprocal giving which is still typical of many African societies¹³³, the continuity of this gift exchange is important:

¹²⁸ Macquarrie, J., *op.cit.*, p.66

¹²⁹ Niebuhr, R., *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol.II, p.320

¹³⁰ quoted in Macquarrie, J., *op.cit.*, p.68

¹³¹ de Lame, D., *Une Colline entre Mille ou le Calme avant la tempete – transformations et Blocages du Rwanda rural*, Tervuren: Musee Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1996; and Taylor, Honey, Money

¹³² Munyagisaka, P., *op. cit.*, p.28

¹³³ See Dalla Costa, M. & Dalla Costa, G.F., (eds), *Paying the Price: Women and the Politics of International Economic Strategy*, Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1993, p.22

person A trusts person B and takes an initiative in giving him a gift; person B expresses acceptance and reciprocates with an appropriate gift. Thus a gift requires another gift in return; otherwise the chain would not continue; and the four inseparable obligations: to give, to receive, to accept the gift and to give back,¹³⁴ that Mauss found to be involved in any kind of gift exchange, would not be established. Although the forces that regulate the supply and demand of gifts are masked, their power and impact are far reaching in the sense that the power of gift goes beyond mathematical calculation to serve as a means to cement social bonds that produce greater social solidarity in the community.¹³⁵ Mauss goes further and suggests that there is a spiritual force that governs the way gift transactions are carried out and continued.¹³⁶ There is also a theological explanation of the power that keeps the circulation of gifts alive. This has to do with the divine love and self-giving act that require the taking of the creation as a precious gift that is to be shared and passed on so that everybody benefits from it. It is in this sense that Jesus referred to Himself as a gift, the bread that the world has to share (Jn 6:51) In Barth's phrase, Christ is 'the man for others'.¹³⁷ God, through Jesus Christ completely surrenders and gives himself to humanity.¹³⁸ In other words, co-operation, reciprocity are fundamental to Christian life within the *koinonia*. As a consequence, Rwandan Christians ought to consider themselves as gifts to one another and all they have as gifts to all of them in a relationship in which God is involved. Thus the unity of the giver, the receiver and the gift ought to be understood in relation to the partnership, *koinonia* of God in the transactions of giving and receiving gifts.

This theological explanation of giving, reciprocity and solidarity can help to correct the faults in Rwandan society. Solidarity has often been abused and undermined by those who benefited from it. Economically successful individuals were obliged to carry the burden of their poor relatives. Sometimes the behaviour and the number of those dependent on one individual was discouraging and hindered both the generosity of the giver and the spirit of self-help in the receiver. This can be painful: "Without risking impoverishment, salaried Rwandans cannot feed, shelter, and clothe every relative who shows up on their doorstep. In refusing hospitality to those who appeal to gift logic, however, a Rwandan runs the risk of being considered

¹³⁴ Godelier, M., *L'Enigme du don*, Paris: Fayard, 1997, p.13

¹³⁵ Pryor, F.L., *The Origins of the Economy – A Comparative Study of Distribution in Primitive and Peasant Economies*, New York: Academic press, 1977, p.196

¹³⁶ Mauss, M., 'Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques', *L'année sociologique*, nouvelle serie, 1, 1925, in *Sociologie et Anthropologie*, Paris, PUF, 1950, pp.164 et 160

¹³⁷ Barth, K., *Church Dogmatics*, III/2, p.228

¹³⁸ Cochrane, A. C., *op.cit.*, p.81

ungenerous or, worse, of being considered a witch”¹³⁹ Thus there were hard choices to be made. As Taylor noted, no matter which way one goes, there are difficulties: “making this selection often entails either jeopardizing a social relationship, because one has failed to heed reciprocity notions, or losing money, because one has heeded them. Being unable to choose, however, is probably the worst predicament of all, for it means that the dilemma is never resolved either in the mind of the individual or in his or her social conduct.”¹⁴⁰

Giving, reciprocity and solidarity in relationships can also contribute to the process of finding an alternative to the current economic trend whereby competition has become the rule of the game. In competition, ‘we think in terms of ‘either/or’: either he goes, or I go. Either his business succeeds, or mine does’.¹⁴¹ Gorringer argues that competition denies a human being’s humanity whilst co-operation is built on it and restores it.¹⁴² Gorringer echoed the argument Barth made earlier that competition implies conflict, casualties and deaths:

Work under the sign of ... competition will always imply as such work in the form of a conflict in which one man encounters another with force and with cunning, and there cannot fail to be innumerable prisoners, wounded and dead. Work under this sign will always be an inhuman activity, and therefore an activity which, in spite of every conceivable alleviation or attempt at relief and order, can never stand before the command of God.¹⁴³

The traditional practice of solidarity and the more recent introduction of friendly societies provide enough foundation on which serious improvements could be achieved in the reduction of socio-economic exclusion and poverty. Solidarity is one of the pillars that held the Rwandan traditional socio-economic fabric together at the village level. Friendly societies have been shaped by the same philosophy that sustained this Rwandan tradition of solidarity. As in many other traditional settings, solidarity, togetherness and mutual trust seem to have been the chief assets of the people.

¹³⁹ Taylor, C. (1992) *op. cit.* p.14

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Barth, K., *Church Dogmatics* III/4, p. 541

¹⁴² Gorringer, T., *Capital and the Kingdom: Theological Ethics and Economic Order*, New York:

Marknoll, 1994, p.98

¹⁴³ Barth, K., *CD* III/4, p.541

Furthermore, solidarity and reciprocity are relevant and important in the Rwandan context because there is no other provision of social security (no state pensions, unemployment benefits, housing benefits or disability benefits). In capitalist industrialised countries, insurance through state provision and pension funds has virtually dispensed with the need for the local church or families to play a part in this area, and it has been observed that the removal of the perceived responsibility of the family to give financial support to its members is one of the main reasons for its demise within Western society.¹⁴⁴ Without solidarity and community ties life would be impossible for many.

The positive elements of solidarity and reciprocal giving call for the preservation of this tradition. But also the abuses that are handed down to following generations need serious consideration. They have to be addressed through common understanding and vision of social relations within a community of God's people bound together by His love and by the love for one another :

For human beings to achieve solidarity, they have to acquire a new vision of their relations with others. Only fraternity with all in their common filial relations to God, can be the foundation for their practical requirements of their solidarity. Only this solidarity can generate a social life that is brotherly and inclusive. Christians are called to spread this truth, but before they even begin to announce it, they have to put it into practice. It is when the Church will be, in its plan, a society of brothers and sisters bound together by solidarity, that the world will learn about its promises treasured in the Gospel.¹⁴⁵

The Rwandan experience proved that solidarity was strong among the poor themselves where reciprocal giving was still being practised. This 'solidarity' or 'one-ness of aim' provides the seed bed for the development of *koinonia*. But despite the recognition of the importance of this solidarity among the poor and what they could do together, the reality was also that in most cases the poor lacked resources to mobilise and generate incomes. It is at this level that wealthy bodies and individual Rwandan Christians will be expected to show their solidarity with those in poverty. The recognition of solidarity as a powerful engine of change brought agencies such as the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society to adopt the policy of 'banking with the unbankable'.

¹⁴⁴ Taylor, C., *op.cit.*, p. 27

¹⁴⁵ Leenhardt, *op.cit.*, p.87, tran. P.Nz.

Mohammed Yunus¹⁴⁶, a Bangladeshi economist, pioneered one of the earliest and most successful micro-enterprise development (MED) programmes with the slogan: 'banking with the unbankable'. Yunus is guided by the principle that 'all human beings, no matter what their handicap, are able to help themselves'.¹⁴⁷ He founded the Grameen Bank to make tiny loans to the rural poor - \$50, \$75 or \$120 to buy a cow, a plough or a small irrigation pump. He soon discovered that women were more likely than men to use the profits to care for their children's health and education, and to expand their small economic activities. One of his principles is that nothing is free and there are no hand-outs which, as Yunus explains, was a challenge in the early days of the project:

At first people didn't like this, - they said the Government will give it to us free. But we explain that if it is not free, we can help again next time; and that it is the people themselves who will have made this possible. They pay back in tiny slices, about 12p a month; and that re-creates our disaster fund. Doing it that way is also more efficient, because if relief is free everyone inflates their demands, and the poorest, who have least clout, will get nothing. If it is not free, you literally count every match.¹⁴⁸

In Bangladesh, where the Grameen Bank began and concentrated on women, this initiative has started off a cultural revolution: "Grameen women have fewer children, are less likely to be divorced and more likely to vote".¹⁴⁹ One of the most valuable assets on which Grameen operates is 'peer pressure'. This is the commodity the poor have more of than anything else. By October 1998, in Bangladesh alone Grameen Bank's assets were estimated to be \$2.5 billion with two million borrowers, most of whom were women. The Bank manages £4.2 billion worth of assets worldwide.¹⁵⁰

A common feature for these low interest loans, is that the relationships between lenders and borrowers has to be closer than they are in normal lending circumstances. For instance if an agency finances an income-generating project, it will need to be more acquainted with the borrower: the nature of his/her project, the activities involved, the conditions of production and the problems he/she incurs.

¹⁴⁶ This example is quoted in Ucko, Hans (ed.) (1997) *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility? Jewish and Christian Insights*. Geneva: WCC Publications.p.121

¹⁴⁷ *The Times*, October 31, 1998, p.18

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

Similar projects have also been established in Rwanda, though they are at an early stage and need further development. Through church-sponsored projects and Non Governmental Organisations, financial support is being offered to friendly societies. Both the Free Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church, through their development departments, operated programmes that loaned livestock to individuals with the aim of increasing their income. Again, relationship is important and allows conflicts to be defused should the borrower face difficulty in paying back the loan. The basic principle is that for instance a person who receives a loan in the form of a goat, cow or pig, he or she will have to pay it back from the offspring of the loaned animal. This animal will then be passed on to another person in the neighbourhood who needs it, and so on. If it happens that an animal does not reproduce quickly, the speed of the process is slowed down, but any difficulties in the relationship between those involved would be minimised because it would be clear to everybody that the other person had experienced unexpected problems outside his control. In a village economy this kind of loan can be easy to achieve.

One of the difficulties when the lender and the borrower are several miles apart is that the lender does not know what and how the borrower is doing. But some international institutions like Grameen Bank, Shared Interest and the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society have managed to link the lenders and the borrowers who live apart. They build on existing local structures, and are more likely to get their help to the target groups.¹⁵¹

Their philosophy emphasises putting people first, working with the poor instead of working for them, peer group acclaim, support, and discipline, and rejection of modernisation as the primary goal of development. With these tools credit-based income generation programmes contribute to the breaking of the constraints that prevent poor people from raising themselves out of poverty, moving them from the fringe of the society where they live as outsiders to living within.¹⁵² According to *Where Credit Is Due*¹⁵³ credit-based income generation programmes, rather than hand-outs, are among the best ways to deal with social exclusion and poverty.

¹⁵¹ The way institutions like Shared Interest and Ecumenical Development Co-operative society have overcome this issue was to produce on a quarterly basis detailed information on different projects; and to set up regional offices in different parts of the world, with partners in regions where they intervene. This is an attempt to link the lenders to the borrowers. But on the local level, they intervene where individuals can work out their own structures for monitoring each other.

¹⁵² Remenyi, J. & Taylor, *op.cit.* p.51

¹⁵³ In this analytical presentation, Remenyi used evidence from programmes that were visited and that accounted together for \$Us 118,000,000 in loans, the average size of which was less than \$100. Supporting evidence was also drawn from programmes reported in the literature which had loaned a further \$US 1,500,000,000 to micro-enterprises for income generation purposes.

Remenyi's evidence is that in most cases where these programmes were implemented:

The permanent income of borrowers increased by not less than 25 percent, jobs were created at a rate of one continuing wage-paying job for every \$1000 or less loaned which is only one-tenth the typical cost of job-creation programmes in the modern sector of two thirds of world economies, on-time repayment rates were better than twice that in commercial financial markets in these countries, default rates were minimal, and estimated social rates of return were typically much greater than those calculated for investments in the modern sector”¹⁵⁴

However if koinonia is to develop, it is important that members of the community themselves contribute to this process. The few years of experience of Rwanda in credit-based income generation programmes show that in most cases the loans were made out of foreign aid either to church sponsored projects or to other NGOs. The practice of using outside money to show economic solidarity with the poor certainly appeals to some middle class and wealthy Rwandans, Christians being no exception, who agree to the proposition that the church's funds be used for loans to the poor who have no securities, but refuse to contribute from their own pockets.¹⁵⁵ There is a need for a change in mentality.

7.9.Conclusion

This chapter emphasised the importance of forgiveness, reconciliation, peace and justice for the post-genocide Rwandan community. Various initiatives already undertaken are exposed and discussed. The Detmold confession is particularly singled out as an act of courage aimed at building bridges, forgiveness and reconciliation. However the criticisms and resentment it raised are evidence that the way to forgiveness and reconciliation is not an easy one.

¹⁵⁴ Remenyi, J., *Where Credit Is Due*, London: Intermediate technology, 1991.

¹⁵⁵ In 1992 the Development Commission of the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda in which I personally participated, discussed the possibility of creating a fund to which the Church and individual members would contribute. The intention was to create a fund from which poor people (who could not qualify for bank loans) would get small loans for income generating projects. Members of the commission categorically rejected the proposal. Curiously, they supported the idea that the Rwandan Free Methodist Church (from aid by Western agencies) should lend money to poor people even if they did not have adequate security. This shows that individual members of the Free Methodist Church supported the concept of credit-based income generating programmes provided they did not pay for it. The challenge is to change this attitude so that when credit-based income generation programmes are shown to work, people will be ready to put their money into them.

Another imperative this chapter stressed is that of peace. The challenge that need to be met is how peacemakers can help to bring about a peace which includes all people and communities in Rwanda within a just and workable framework for the future, when fighting has become the preferred option for resolving conflicts. Demilitarisation is one of the possible ways towards peace. *Koinonia* is proposed as an ideal of community of peace in which peacemakers can help to develop and disseminate a common basis for peace through a framework of principles which cannot be identified with any particular ethnic group or political party.

Justice is shown to be an important principle for the protection and respect for the dignity of every member of the Rwandan community, and for the distribution of resources. This principle would underlie the redistribution of land, education and taxation policy. Reforms must ensure that land-use, education and taxation serve the community and not a few individuals; not only men but also women. The Rwandan Church as one of the main landholding institutions in Rwanda and guarantor of education has a major role to play in this process. But since the international Christian community is in fellowship with the Rwandan Christian community it cannot escape its responsibility in the search for peace and justice. It is its mission to be the 'light' and 'salt' of the world and to promote the fullness of life. To achieve this the Rwandan Christian community needs to strengthen both its internal unity through reconciliation and its ties with world-wide ecclesiastical institutions in order to address issues that are beyond its own powers, such as the injustices in world trade and the practices of some multinational corporations. A breakthrough is needed for Rwandan Christian institutions in particular, to rethink their attitude towards financial investment. This issue has been muzzled either by religious belief or by fear of not being able to do something about it.

Equality and fairness are important for reciprocal transactions and mutual recognition. Responsible giving, reciprocity and solidarity are some of the concepts that can help to correct the disadvantages brought about by the *ubuhake* ideology and capitalistic competition. These concepts can contribute to the creation to a just and equitable community, living according to its means, whose lifestyle does not compromise the ideal of community that the principle of *koinonia* represents.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The 1994 Rwandan tragedy was an unforgettable event in human history, by the huge number of its victims and by the long term consequences it is bound to cause in future generations of Rwandans. In our view, many factors contributed to its happening. This thesis was a study of factors which cumulatively provided the conditions for the eruption of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. And the concept of *koinonia* is presented in this study as a way of understanding the ideal of community from which Rwandans can learn and work towards. In our view this concept offers a good way of highlighting the need for forgiveness, reconciliation, peace and justice, which are of paramount importance for the Rwandan broken community. In addition, *koinonia*'s eschatological aspect offers the possibility for hope which is needed for the rebuilding the Rwandan community. Its orientation toward the future prevent people from being trapped by the past and allows them to be builders of a community of real peace and justice which is a never-ending exercise. It is our hope that Christians in Rwanda and outside in the world church will better understand both the conditions that contributed to the Rwandan tragedy and the principles for building a better community.

However, as in any theological discussion, this study does not claim to have exhausted all the meanings, interpretations and suggestions that need to be made of the Rwandan experience. More remains to be said. In fact, this present work will have to be subjected to its own theological analysis and interpretation; as Macquarrie rightly noted 'there can never be one tidy final interpretation, (...) there is in both God and man an inexhaustibility that no verbal formulation can finally grasp'.¹ It is equally true that the Christian narrative is a story that can never be fully told, always told in part till the coming of Christ.² More theological research needs to be done on specific issues raised in this research such as land ownership, education, taxation, gender and debt. Similarly, the search for love, peace and justice is a continual task. *Koinonia* as the ideal of community in which love, peace, justice and equality are given their real and true meanings, is a possibility that is to be worked out until the fulfilment of the Kingdom. We have argued that *koinonia*'s double aspects of

¹ Macquarrie, J., *op.cit.*, p.38

² Thiemann, R.F., *Constructing a Public Theology, The Church in a Pluralistic Culture*, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991, p.139

relevance for the present community and the community that is to come are present in working for peace, justice and reconciliation in Rwanda.

In the first chapter we made a survey of the Rwandan conflict and the relevance of the concept of *koinonia* for the understanding of an ideal community. The breakdown of the Rwandan community was the result of a prolonged experience of socio-economic exclusion sustained by ethnicity, bad colonial policy, bad Rwandan leadership and some external factors. With its constituents of love, peace, justice and equality, *Koinonia* was presented as the principle which best expresses the kind of relationships Rwandans ought to have formed with one another and with God. This concept of *koinonia* and the Hebrew self-understanding of what it means to be a people of God have helped to bring to the fore issues in Rwandan society that undermined community life and caused the deterioration of relationships among Rwandans. These issues included land-ownership, the rush for wealth, the availability of education and work opportunities. Sadly tools which God put at the disposal of His people to enhance the life of all members of the community served more as means of exclusion rather than inclusion.

In our view the breakdown of the Rwandan community stemmed from a deep-seated problem of resource-sharing. Chapter two discussed how myths and ideologies of economic exploitation leading to all sorts of exclusion were used by different ruling classes that governed Rwanda at different periods. The tragic realities of Rwandans excluded from their lands which constituted their only source of revenues is also exposed in this chapter. Christian churches played a major role in the development of this situation through acquisition of large areas of land and their acceptance of the myth of a superior race, and the fact that since the coming of Christian missionaries, Rwanda has been governed almost exclusively by 'Christian' leaders, who practised socio-economic exploitation. Accidents of genetics and class have determined people's privileges. The ideal community, the *koinonia* of love, peace, justice and equality did not, and could not exist under these conditions.

Chapter three discussed the knock-on effect of the introduction of the capitalist economic principle. Money, markets and trade made a positive contribution to the well-being of the Rwandan community. However, they made also a negative contribution to social relations among Rwandans. Internally the old ties between people disappeared as Rwandans grew individualistic, breaking the fellowship in possession and work that existed in the Rwandan community. The selling and buying

of lands resulted in the concentration of it into the hands of a small minority and the exclusion of many others. The practice of lending with interest divorced debt from kinship, neighbours and community solidarity. In spite of the positive contribution of money as a medium of exchange and storage of wealth, it altered gender relations since its accumulation has led to increasing inequalities between men and women. In addition to the traditional division of labour and spheres of intervention, came the distinction between financially rewarding activities (for men) and financially unrewarding activities (for women). Cash crops were men's domain while food crops became women's domain.

The accumulation of foreign debt led the Rwandan community to be economically isolated and excluded from the economically viable countries. Since most of this borrowed money went into individual accounts that had little to do with the projects it was intended for, the gap between the rich and the poor increased while the responsibility of paying the debt continued to fall on the poor. Rwandan farmers felt much of this economic exclusion as the world economic system that discriminates against producers in third World countries took its toll. This trend is the antidote of the concept of *koinonia* when seen in the light of the ideas of love, peace, justice and equality which point to a situation where every member of the community would have enough land to plough, help each other and live in tranquillity.

Chapter four showed how through taxation many Rwandans were exploited and oppressed. The Rwandan taxation policy has its roots in the idea that the powerful who had conquered a land and its people should get something for that victory. This idea that taxation has to benefit the powerful survived and was carried over to the colonial and post-colonial Rwanda. The result was the division of the Rwandan community into an overtaxed class that sweated only for the feeding and up-keep of another class that lived in idleness. The role of the Christian community is called into question by its contribution or participation to that practice and its duty in the building of a *koinonia* which it exists to exemplify.

Chapter five exposed the shortcomings of the Rwandan community in educational policy and distribution of educational opportunities. It focussed on both the content and purpose of education. It showed that Rwandan education became a fertile ground in which the Rwandan elite sowed seeds of regional, ethnic, religious and gender discrimination, discontent and exclusion. Like the *ubuhake* ideology, this kind of education carried the danger of blinding the people it should have helped to liberate.

It was argued that though it produced intellectuals, it was grounded in an exclusive policy that went against the concept of a community that cares and looks after each one of its members. Instead of education aiming at helping pupils to integrate into the community by providing them with opportunities to tackle questions of human existence and its meaning, it aimed at providing for the demands of the colonial administration and the industrial society. Thus the content of education was almost empty of human and community dimensions. It did not transcend social, ethnic, regional and gender boundaries. Compassion and justice were not reflected in the way education was designed and the way it was distributed.

Chapter six describes the Rwandan community in the period running up to the tragedy. After the 1970s those in authority began to accumulate wealth, pursue of fame and self-aggrandisement increased. The chief means of economic advancement ceased to be one's incorporation into the ruling class which gave free acquisition of cows, land, wives and children. Instead it was to get into the state bureaucracy which gave free access to land and money. The *ubuhake* system re-emerged with a new group of beneficiaries and became even stronger than in previous periods. During this period it was clear that the Rwandan community was being torn apart and that something disastrous would happen. The small group that held both political and economic power had engaged in armed conflicts against those who wanted to share it. Each group was determined literally, to stick to its guns. It was the failure of these fighting groups to share the political power which guaranteed economic power, together with a population socially excluded from the life of its community that provided the conditions for the 1994 genocide.

Ethnicity was and indeed remains an important factor in this process of social and economic exclusion. Both Hutu and Tutsi ruling classes, at different stages, drew boundaries around themselves in an attempt to monopolise the economic resources of the Rwandan community. However it is important not to lose sight of other forms in which socio-economic problems were manifested. Men drew boundaries around themselves preventing women's equal access to land, education and employment. Roman Catholics drew boundaries around themselves to prevent Protestants from enjoying equal opportunities in schools and employment. The rich drew boundaries around themselves separating themselves from the mass of poor Rwandans. Cities erected barriers to prevent invasion from the countryside. Such excluding boundaries generated dissatisfaction in those with too little, insecurity for those with too much and contributed to the 1994 genocide.

Chapter seven discussed the need for reconciliation, peace and justice as elements of the *koinonia* an ideal of community to strive for. Recognition of the wrong that has been committed, repentance and forgiveness have been emphasised as crucial steps towards the healing and rebuilding of the Rwandan community. Peace and justice are the product and signs of a forgiving and reconciled community. They both point to a situation of prosperity as well as well-being, tranquillity or absence of strife, where the expectation of real peace and justice becomes one with the expectation of the *koinonia*, the kingdom of God that is to come. They involve the rejection of violence and social exclusion. In this chapter we argued that working for peace and justice in Rwanda entailed some practical action such as land redistribution, educational and taxation reforms, options for the poor through ethical investments, solidarity and reciprocal giving. Other principles proposed were equality and fairness in the way members of the Rwandan community value each other and share what they have. Equal opportunities, equal participation and equal share of the country's output, without reference to their gender, their ethnic provenance, their religion and region of birth are basic to the concept of *koinonia*. Education, taxation and economic policies need to reflect this ideal and be directed towards this goal.

In this mingling of concerns, the greatest and most encompassing ethic hammered out in the insights of the great prophets and perfected by Jesus: to 'love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbour as yourself' has to be upheld. Loving your neighbour in this way means having towards him invincible and continual good will to include and to share. According to Kierkegaard this love is to be continually renewed. He says: 'Christian love, never for a moment forgets where it is to be judged; that is, morning or evening or whenever it may be-in short, every time it returns home for a moment from all its tasks, love is examined in order promptly to be sent out again'.³ Gorringer reiterated also the need for the Christian community to understand itself as a community of forgiven sinners on the way to becoming better, a community constantly in need of reformation.⁴ Such a Christian attitude will not only help the Rwandan community from once more risking self-destruction, but will give to the community its hope in and dependence on God, promoting and sustaining the well-being of every member of the community.

³ Kierkegaard, S., *Works of Love*, Edited and translated with introduction and notes by Hong, H.V. & Hong, E.H., Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995, 190

⁴ Gorringer, T., *op.cit.*, 1996, p. 270

In *Koinonia*, God's embracing love is contrasted with man-made boundaries. We presented the Old Testament readings as showing that the Hebrew tribal view of God gradually gave way to the universal identification of humanity as God's people, God's kingdom extending to all nations, all peoples on earth. In the New Testament also, in Jesus Christ God welcomes and makes himself available to all humanity. We argued that Christians are members of the *koinonia*, the household of God, the Kingdom of peace and of justice. And that the criteria of entrance into this *koinonia* are not based on gender, ethnic identity or region of birth, but on God's grace in offering himself as the cornerstone on which *koinonia* is built. He is its initiator, he is in the middle of it, the fulfilment of its life and its destiny. This eschatological element of the *koinonia* is important because it is what keeps Christians working for peace, justice and reconciliation now and for the future. This is what makes the *koinonia*, a distinctive concept according to which individuals respond positively and freely to the self-giving act of God in the *koinonia* to which humanity is invited to share and live an abundant life. Individual responses are bound to lead to social and universal implications as God making himself known to entire communities in every detail of their lives.

Therefore the challenge for Christians in Rwanda (with the assistance of other Christians outside in the world church) is to work towards a community or fellowship in which land, wealth, education and employment enhance the lives of all Rwandans as a community. Just as the economic sphere became a thermometer which revealed both the spiritual temperature of relationship between God and Israel and also the extent to which Israel was conforming to the social shape required of her in consistency with her status as God's redeemed people; in the same way Rwandan Christians have the task of translating elements of *koinonia* into social and economic justice. This would be a testimony that *koinonia* is concerned and competent in socio-economic matters of our time such as land use, cash cropping, taxation, education and employment, as well as the kingdom of peace and justice that is to come.

Consequently Christians in Rwanda and outside in the world church must focus their work on the immediacy of God's demanding presence, his will for peace and justice for today's Rwanda; must participate also in the hopes and struggles for real peace and justice in the *koinonia* that is to come. When the community of Israel disintegrated through sin and selfishness, when Jews preyed on other Jews, there was

the divine imperative through the Jubilee law to begin again from the first principles of interdependence and community. Like the Jubilee year which meant freedom from the past with its injustices and inequalities *koinonia* can serve as model for liberating the Rwandan community from the power of myths and ideologies that imprison it, for the reconciliation of its members and for new beginnings. In fact when I started this research I could identify myself with the good side of the Rwandan community which I thought to be innocent, and with the victims of the past injustices to whom peace and justice had to be given. Through this research I discovered that I have been subjected and affected by the same myths and ideology; my inclusion in the Rwandan élite meant not only that somebody else was excluded from education, but also that I accepted and lived the same discriminatory principle. I feel a sense of responsibility as one of the educated Rwandan Christians who could have contributed more to the betterment of social relations among Rwandans. Therefore I identify with the Rwandan community that needs renewal and reconciliation, a community that needs to be constantly working for peace and justice and reconciliation.

May this concept of *koinonia* serve as calling towards the Rwandan and international Christian communities to engage tirelessly in work for peace, justice and reconciliation among Rwandans and to transmit hope for a better future.

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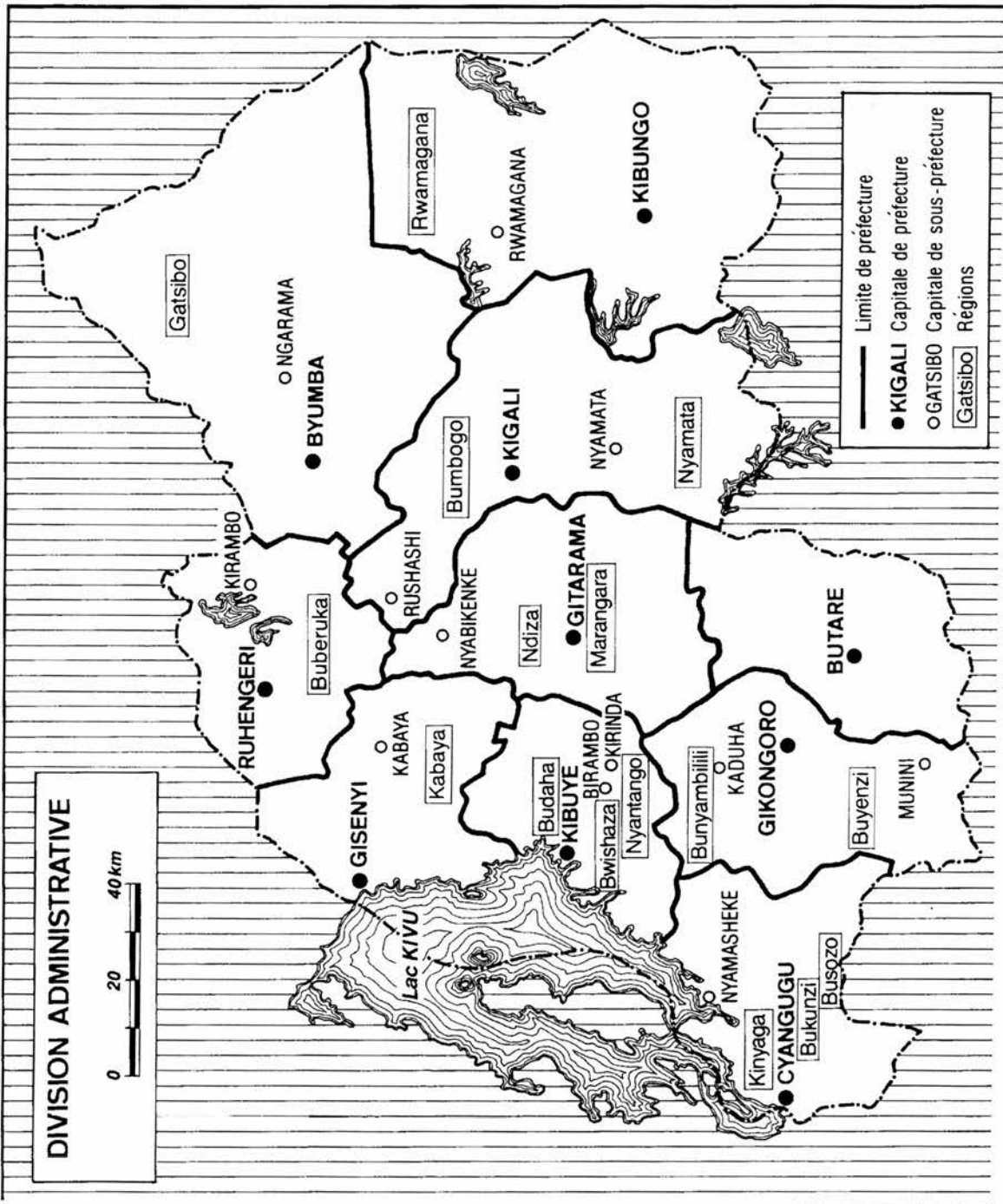
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APPENDIX I: MAP OF RWANDA



APPENDIX II: THE CONTRACT OF *UBUHAKE*

This contract was written in 1941 by the *Conseil du Mwami*; it was made compulsory in January 1942:

Art.1. - Nature of the Contract of *Ubugaragu*

The *ubugaragu* contract is a covenant freely entered into by two persons. The first, called *Shebuja*, gives the second, called *Umugaragu*, one or more head of cattle: the *umugaragu* is responsible for the good husbandry of the cattle and to give the *shebuja* the services clearly set out in the contract or customarily provided.

Art.2. - Forms of *ubugaragu* contract

The *ubugaragu* contract may be completed verbally; in this case one or more witnesses are present with each of the contracting parties. The parties are however recommended to have every current contract registered by the chieftom court in the jurisdiction of the *shebuja*.

The local court competent to register an *ubugaragu* contract is the one in the legal district in which the *shebuja* has his principal dwelling. Every *ubugaragu* contract finalised after 1 January 1942 must be registered; after that date the local courts will refuse to settle differences arising from an unregistered contract made after the date stated in this document

The registration of contracts is done, not by the clerk but by the judge of the local court; the judge has the duty of documenting and counselling the parties involved; he will refuse to register the contracts that do not satisfy the requirements stated in this document.

Art.3. – Duties of the *Shebuja*

The essential duty of the *shebuja* is to hand over to his *umugaragu* at least one highly fertile cow. If this condition is not fulfilled, the contract is nullified. Furthermore, the *shebuja* must help and protect his *umugaragu* whenever the latter, without any fault on his part, is in difficulty.

Art.4. – Duties of the *Umugaragu*

According to custom, the duties of the *umugaragu* are in two categories:

- A. – Obligatory services
- B. – Requested services

Art.5. – Obligatory services

(1)*le gufata igihe*, (2)*le kuralira*, (3)*le kwubaka inkike*, (4)*l'ingishwa*, (5)*l'umurundo*, (6)*l'indemano ou umunani*.

Art.6. - Le gufata igihe

The *gufata igihe* is the duty/responsibility which the *umugaragu* takes on, to be in attendance on his *shebuja* a certain number of days each years, during which he may be required to carry out particular works or errands, according to his ability, his social status and the customs of the region. The contracts must state exactly the duration of each period of service.

Art.7. - Le kuralira

The *kuralira* is the duty of the *umugaragu* to keep watch, at night, over the house of the *Shebuja*. The contract must state exactly the duration of this service.

Art. 8. - Le kubak'inkike

The *kubak'inkike* is the duty the *umugaragu* undertakes to co-operate in the construction and maintenance of the *Shebuja* fence. The *umugaragu* must carry this out every year. If by any chance the *shebuja's* hut is destroyed, he may compel his *umugaragu* then to give services for twice the duration fixed in the contract, but in this case there will be no service during the following year. Since the *umugaragu* must do building work to their *shebuja*, and since the King is the *shebuja* of all the chiefs and sub-chiefs, the latter must co-operate without payment in the construction of pens for the King's cattle. It follows that wherever the king's cattle are, the construction of pens is incumbent on the chiefs and sub-chiefs.

Art. 9. L'ingishwa

The *ingishwa* is the responsibility undertaken by the *umugaragu* to provide a milking cow for his *shebuja* when it is the *shebuja's* turn to attend his *shebuja* or when he is away for a fairly long time.

Art. 10. - The umurundo

The *umurundo* is the right of the *shebuja* to have all the cattle kept by his *umugaragu* or dependent on him, to be brought to him.

- (a) If for any reason all the cattle cannot be brought, the *umugaragu* must give notice before hand which are missing.
- (b) The *umurundo* can be ordered by the *shebuja* as often as the oversight of the *umugaragu*'s management requires it.
- (c) Once during the life of the *shebuja*, *umurundo* can be followed by removal of cattle.
- (d) This removal will cover the whole herd for which the *umugaragu* is responsible in any capacity, but the *shebuja* cannot include the cattle burdened by third party rights such as the *ingwate*, *inkwano* for which the *indonogranyo* has not been paid.
- (e) The right of removal is limited to one cow out of ten.
- (f) In the evaluation of a herd, on which the removal depends, a cow in calf counts as one cow.
- (g) In a herd of between 7 and 9 beasts, the *shebuja* will be able to remove one heifer, between 5 and 6, a female calf; between 3 beasts or less, a bull calf.

Art.11. – The *indemano* or the *umunani*

The *umunani* is the endowment in cattle, appointed by the *shebuja*, for the benefit of one of his sons when he becomes established outside the paternal estate

The endowment of the first is taken from *inyarurembo* herd of the father; the endowment of the second is provided by the fathers' *abagaragu*, and similarly for the other sons.

The maximum removal for *indemano* or *umunani* is fixed at the rate of one adult cow for every 20 persons dependent on the *umugaragu*; a herd of 14 to 19 will give a heifer; a herd 8 to 13 beasts a female calf, a herd of 7 or fewer will give a bull calf.

Art.22. – Rights of the *Umugaragu*

The '*umugaragu*' can dispose of his *shebuja*'s cattle by sale, gift, slaughter or in any other way, so long as his husbandry is good. The *umugaragu* must always inform his *shebuja* if one or more of his cattle gives birth to twins.

APPENDIX III: ABOLITION OF *UBUHAKE*

ARRÊTÉ No 1/54 DU 1er AVRIL 1954 MODIFIÉ PAR CEUX DU 3 AOÛT 1954 ET DU 1er FÉVRIER 1956

Progressive abolition of the custom known as *ubuhake*

The King of Rwanda

In view of the order of 14. July. 1953 on the indigenous political reorganisation of Ruanda – Urundi, and especially article 34 of this order;

In view of the 'ordonnance' no 2121/86 du 10 July 1953 of the Governor of Ruanda – Urundi detailing measures for the application of the above order;

In view of the King of Rwanda's circulars no 33 of 30 April 1952 and no 33 of 11 November 1953, relative to the projected abolition of the custom of *ubuhake* (pastoral vassalage and land lord);

Given that *ubuhake* which played so great a part in Ruanda is now a hindrance to the free development of personal initiatives, to the rapid development and ownership of cattle farms;

Given that it is important in this case to direct the evolution of the custom to adapt it to new needs, while at the same time to make rules which avoid as far as possible any public disorder occasioned by the abolition of the former institution;

Given, therefore, that the abolition must be carried out wisely and gradually;

In view of the advice in keeping with that expressed by the High council of State in its plenary session on 24 February 1954;

WE RULE THAT

Art. 2. The duties of the *ubuhake* contract cease with the division of the herd. This division will be carried out either by the agreement of the two parties, the *umugaragu* and the *shebuja* or on the demand of one of the parties and so long as it concerns a contract on the first step of the cattle – keeping ladder, that is to say a contract in which the *umugaragu* has no employees or whose clientele has been built up without the knowledge of his *shebuja* by the ending of the *ubuhake* – cattle.

If it is proved that the *umugaragu* of the second degree is putting off the division with his subordinates, solely to elude the division with his *shebuja*, the latter may summon him to the competent court, which will be able to order the division.

Art. 4. The division will be carried out in the following propositions: 1/3 of the herd apportioned to the *shebuja*, and 2/3 to the *umugaragu* when the *umurundo* has not been carried out between the parties, but when the *umurundo* has been carried out the proposition will be 1/4 of the herd to the *shebuja* and 3/4 to the *umugaragu*.

Art. 6. It is forbidden to make any further contract. For the existing contracts, the courts will decide on acquired rights and damages if a case arises.

Art. 7. The practice of *umurundo* is prohibited.

Art. 10. Divisions will be registered by the law office annexed to the competent indigenous court on a legal form which will give the date, place, and different kinds of division, and will specify in each case that the links of submission based on cow clientship are now dissolved between the parties.

Art. 12. Those who infringe this ruling will be liable to maximum sentence of one month's penal servitude and/or a fine of 1000 FRW

Art. 13. Any provisions regarding the *ubugaragu* contract of 1er August 1941 which are not contrary to this ruling remains in force.

Art. 14. This ruling comes into effect on 19 April 1954.

NYANZA-RUANDA, le 1er Avril 1954

Mutara Rudahigwa

Publié par le B.J.T.I., no14, mars 1955, p.799-803

(Extraits des 14 articles de l'Arrêté)